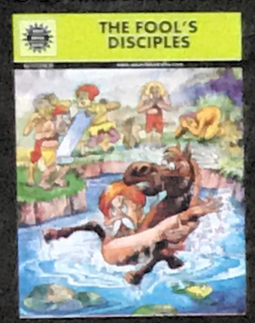
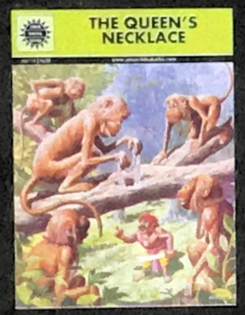
THE TIGER AND THE WOODPECKER

Telugu, a vibrant language even in medieval times, produced the distinguished poet Manchana. His stories are all delightful lessons in wisdom. Some teach us the value of honour while others tell us that might is not always right. We see a tiny rat outwitting a venomous serpent and then an old turtle saving his friends from a greedy eagle. Read on to learn a trick or two...

FABLES & HUMOUR

OTHER ACK FABLES & HUMOUR:





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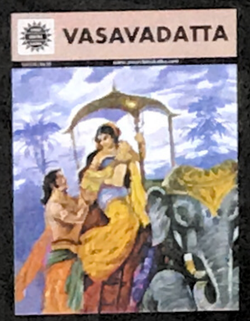

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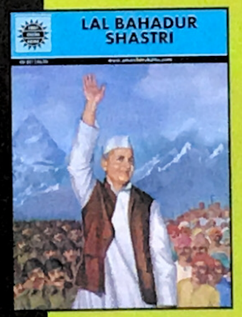

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THE TIGER AND THE WOODPECKER

ANIMAL TALES FROM A TELUGU CLASSIC

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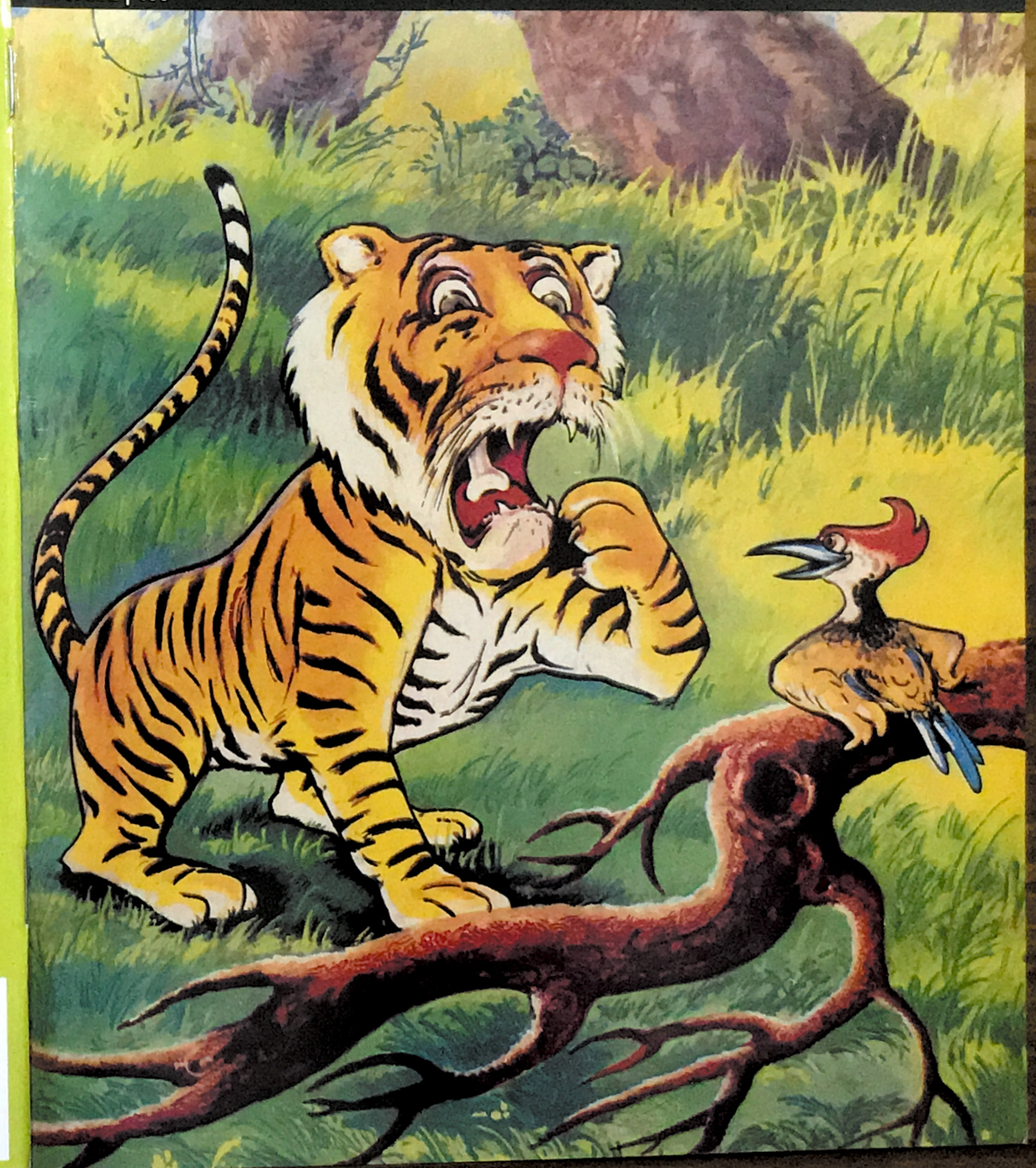
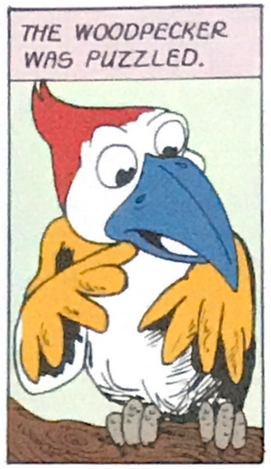


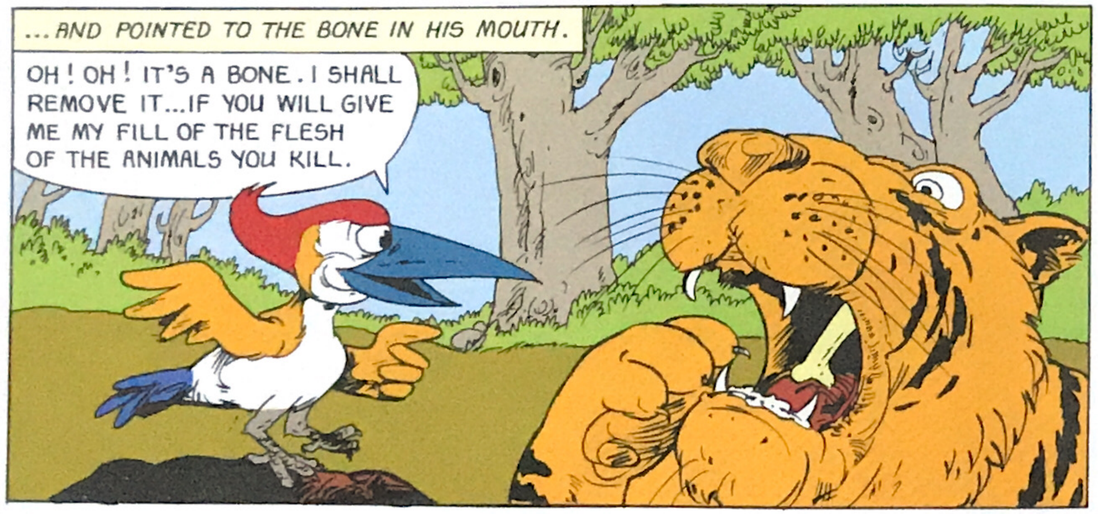
THE TIGER AND THE WOODPECKER

ONE DAY, AS A TIGER WAS DEVOURING THE GAME HE HAD KILLED, A BONE STUCK IN HIS JAW. A WOODPECKER, WHO LIVED IN THE BRANCHES ABOVE, WATCHED HIM.


THE WOODPECKER WAS PUZZLED.

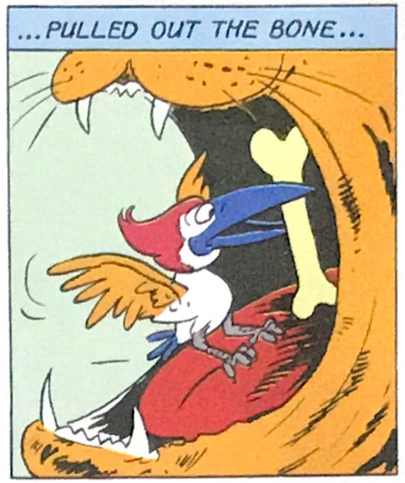
WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH YOU? WHY DO YOU LIE THERE WITH YOUR MOUTH OPEN?

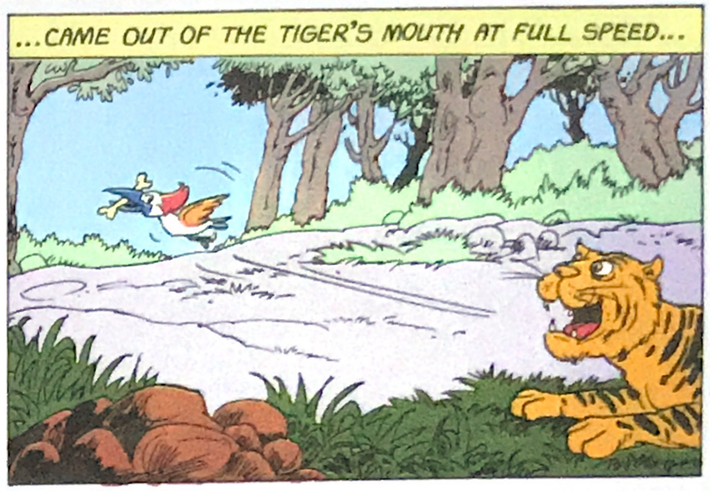
THE TIGER BECKONED TO THE WOODPECKER TO COME NEAR...


...AND POINTED TO THE BONE IN HIS MOUTH.
OH! OH! IT'S A BONE. I SHALL REMOVE IT...IF YOU WILL GIVE ME MY FILL OF THE FLESH OF THE ANIMALS YOU KILL.

THE TIGER NODDED HIS HEAD.

THE WOODPECKER FLEW INTO THE TIGER'S MOUTH...


...PULLED OUT THE BONE...


...CAME OUT OF THE TIGER'S MOUTH AT FULL SPEED...

...FLEW UP TO THE TREE...

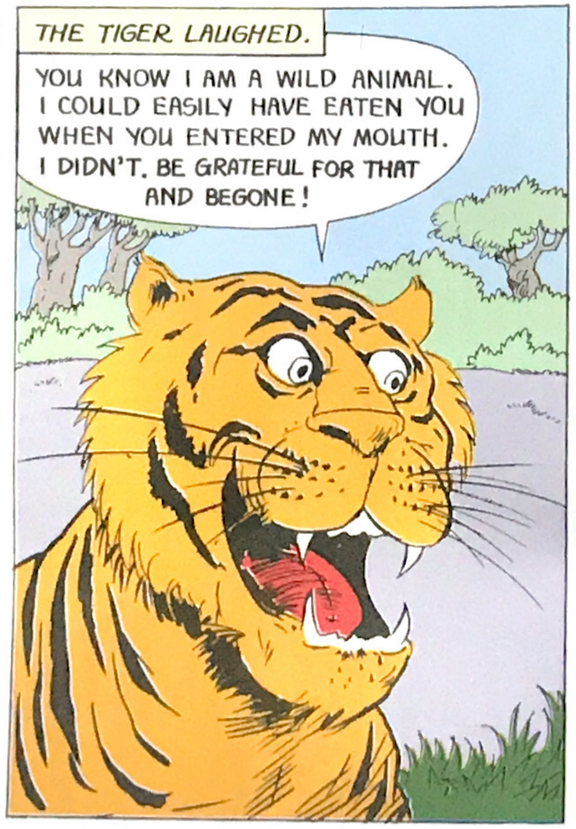
...AND PERCHING THERE, DROPPED THE BONE.
I'M STARVING. I'D BETTER GET MYSELF SOME FOOD.

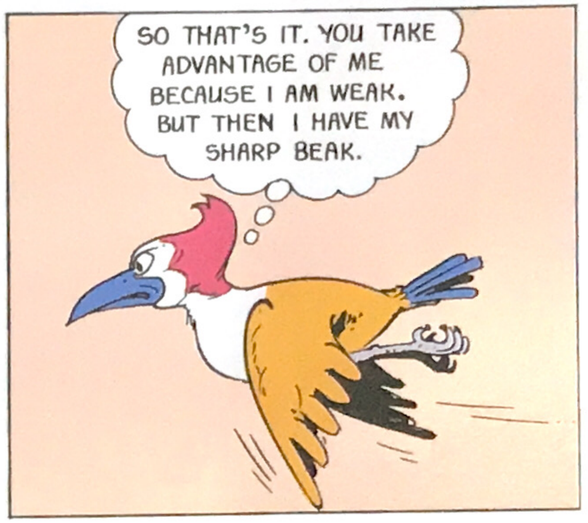
A FEW HOURS LATER, THE TIGER KILLED AN ANIMAL AND BEGAN DEVOURING IT.
HEY, FRIEND, WAIT! HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN YOUR PROMISE? GIVE ME MY SHARE.

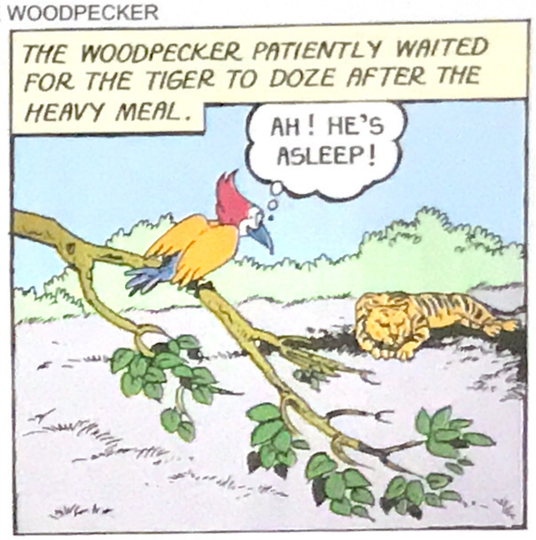
THE TIGER LOOKED AT THE WOODPECKER AND PRETENDED HE HAD NEVER SEEN HIM BEFORE.
WHO ARE YOU? WHY SHOULD I OFFER YOU ANY PART OF THIS?

THE WOODPECKER WAS SHOCKED.
WHAT!

DON'T YOU REMEMBER ME? I PULLED OUT THE BONE FROM YOUR MOUTH. HOW COULD YOU FORGET ME SO SOON?

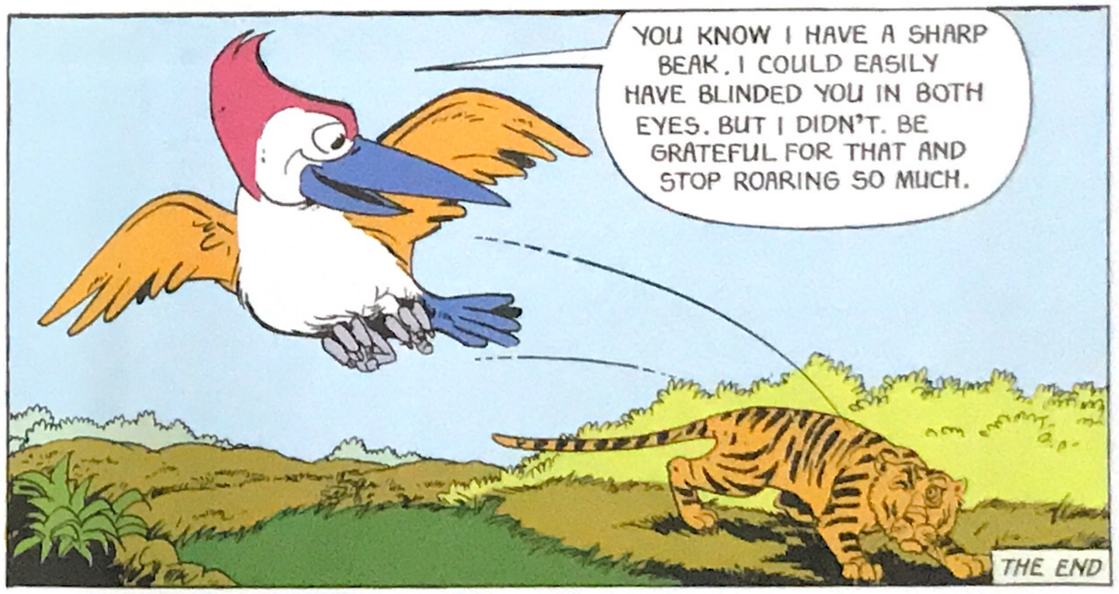

THE TIGER LAUGHED.
YOU KNOW I AM A WILD ANIMAL. I COULD EASILY HAVE EATEN YOU WHEN YOU ENTERED MY MOUTH. I DIDN'T. BE GRATEFUL FOR THAT AND BEGONE!


SO THAT'S IT. YOU TAKE ADVANTAGE OF ME BECAUSE I AM WEAK. BUT THEN I HAVE MY SHARP BEAK.


THE WOODPECKER PATIENTLY WAITED FOR THE TIGER TO DOZE AFTER THE HEAVY MEAL.
AH! HE'S ASLEEP!

IT SWOOPED DOWN AND PECKED AT ONE OF THE TIGER'S EYES, BLINDING IT.

THE TIGER ROARED WITH PAIN.
AH! YOU'VE PIERCED MY EYE. HOW COULD YOU BE SO CRUEL?


YOU KNOW I HAVE A SHARP BEAK. I COULD EASILY HAVE BLINDED YOU IN BOTH EYES. BUT I DIDN'T. BE GRATEFUL FOR THAT AND STOP ROARING SO MUCH.
THE END

THE CLEVER TURTLE

LONG AGO, THERE LIVED A FEW TURTLES ON A SEA COAST. EVERY DAY AN EAGLE USED TO CATCH ONE OF THEM FOR FOOD.

THIS WORRIED AN AGED TURTLE.

AT THIS RATE, NOT ONE OF US WILL BE LEFT ALIVE.

WE MUST DO SOMETHING TO SAVE OURSELVES.

HE WITHDREW INTO HIS SHELL AND BEGAN TO THINK HARD.

WHY, THAT'S IT! WHY DIDN'T I THINK OF IT BEFORE!

HE CALLED A MEETING OF THE SURVIVING TURTLES.

IF YOU DO AS I SAY, WE CAN GET RID OF THE EAGLE FOR GOOD.

WE'LL DO ANYTHING YOU SAY TO SAVE OUR LIVES.

ALL RIGHT. THEN HIDE YOURSELVES IN THE WATER WHEN YOU SEE THE EAGLE TOMORROW.

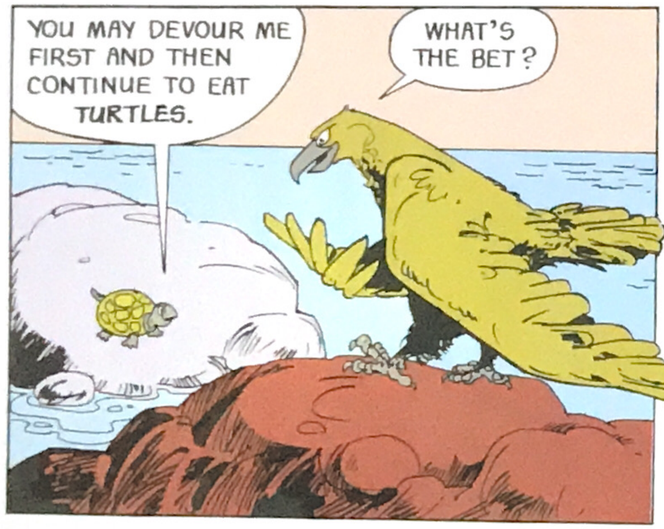
THE NEXT DAY, WHEN THE EAGLE SWOOPED DOWN AS USUAL—

QUICK! INTO THE WATER.

WHEN THE EAGLE CAME NEARER—

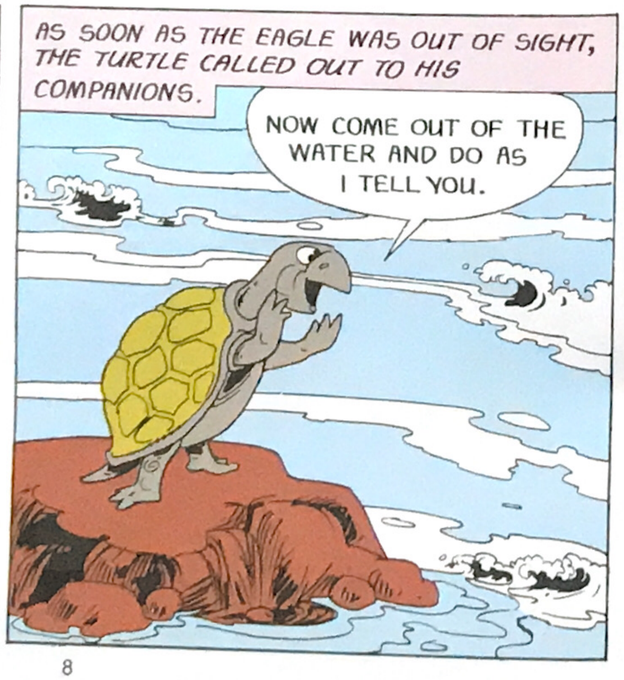
O EAGLE, ALL MY RELATIVES HAVE BEEN DEVOURED BY YOU. I AM THE ONLY ONE LEFT NOW.

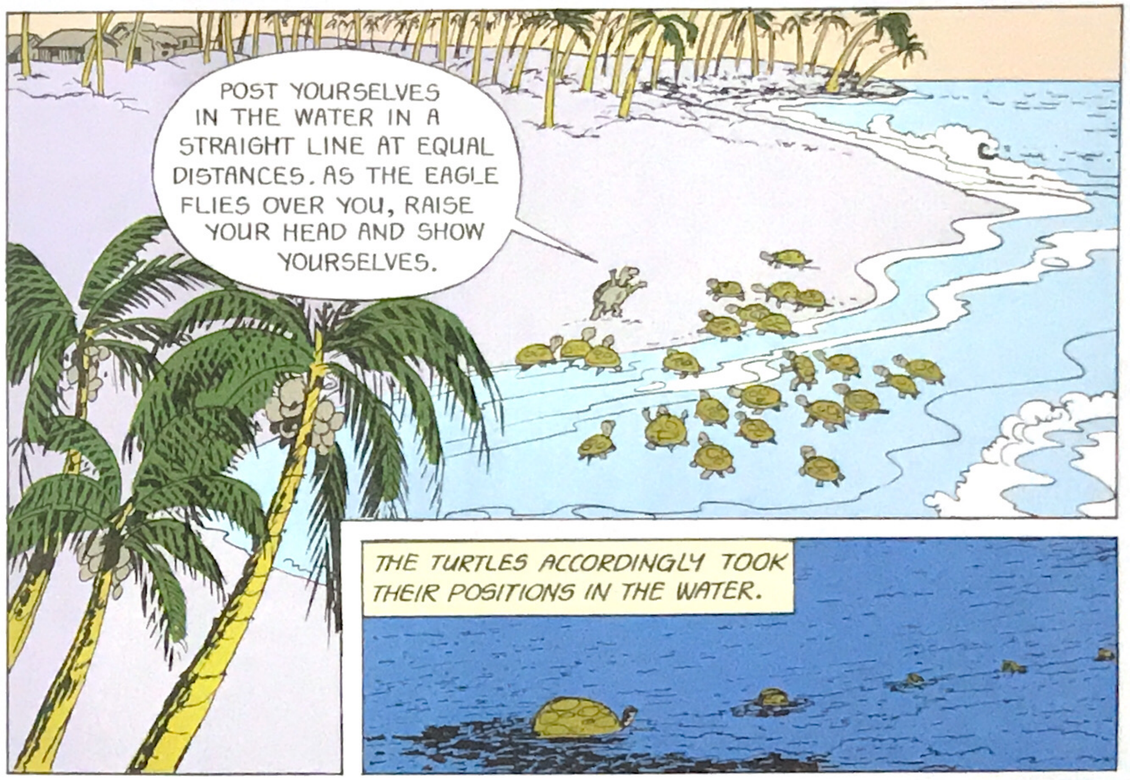
I'D LIKE TO SAVE MY LIFE. WILL YOU MAKE A BET WITH ME? IF YOU LOSE, YOU MUST NEVER EAT TURTLES AGAIN.
IF I WIN?


YOU MAY DEVOUR ME FIRST AND THEN CONTINUE TO EAT TURTLES.
WHAT'S THE BET?

LET'S RUN A RACE. I'LL SWIM IN THE SEA WHILE YOU FLY IN THE SKY. LET'S BEGIN THE RACE A WEEK FROM TODAY.
AGREED!

ABSOLUTELY SURE OF WINNING, THE EAGLE FLEW AWAY.
A FOOL, THIS TURTLE. OF COURSE, I'LL WIN THE BET.


AS SOON AS THE EAGLE WAS OUT OF SIGHT, THE TURTLE CALLED OUT TO HIS COMPANIONS.
NOW COME OUT OF THE WATER AND DO AS I TELL YOU.


POST YOURSELVES IN THE WATER IN A STRAIGHT LINE AT EQUAL DISTANCES. AS THE EAGLE FLIES OVER YOU, RAISE YOUR HEAD AND SHOW YOURSELVES.
THE TURTLES ACCORDINGLY TOOK THEIR POSITIONS IN THE WATER.

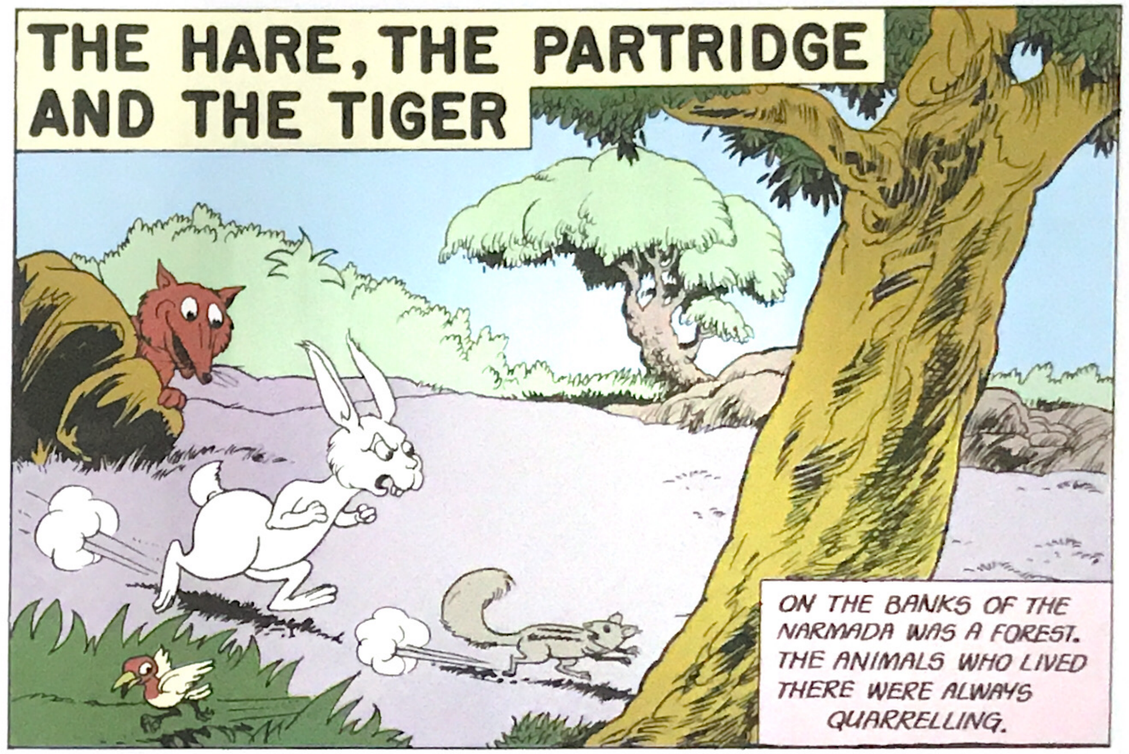
A WEEK LATER, THE RACE BETWEEN THE EAGLE AND THE TURTLE BEGAN.
ARE YOU READY?
LET'S GO.

THE EAGLE FLEW WITH GREAT SPEED BUT...

...THE TURTLE SEEMED TO BE ALWAYS AHEAD OF HIM BY MILES
I CANNOT KEEP IT UP ANY LONGER. BUT THE TURTLE SEEMS FRESH AS EVER.

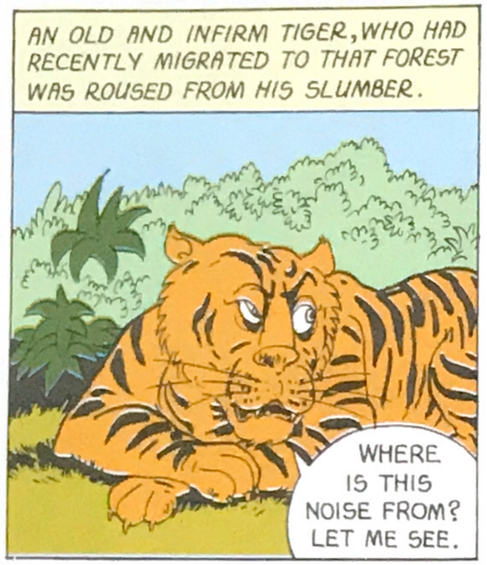
NO. I CANNOT. LET ME FLY AWAY TO A TREE ON SHORE BEFORE I FALL DOWN EXHAUSTED.

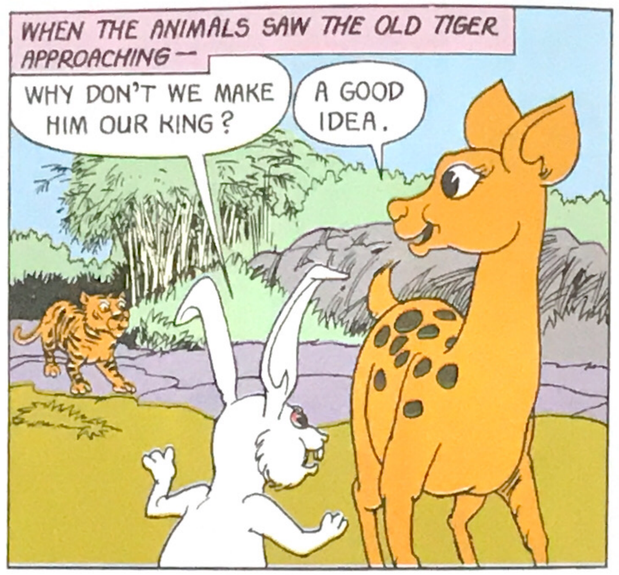
THE NEXT DAY, HE CAME TO SEE THE OLD TURTLE.
YOU WIN. I WILL NEVER EAT ANOTHER TURTLE IN MY LIFE.
THE END

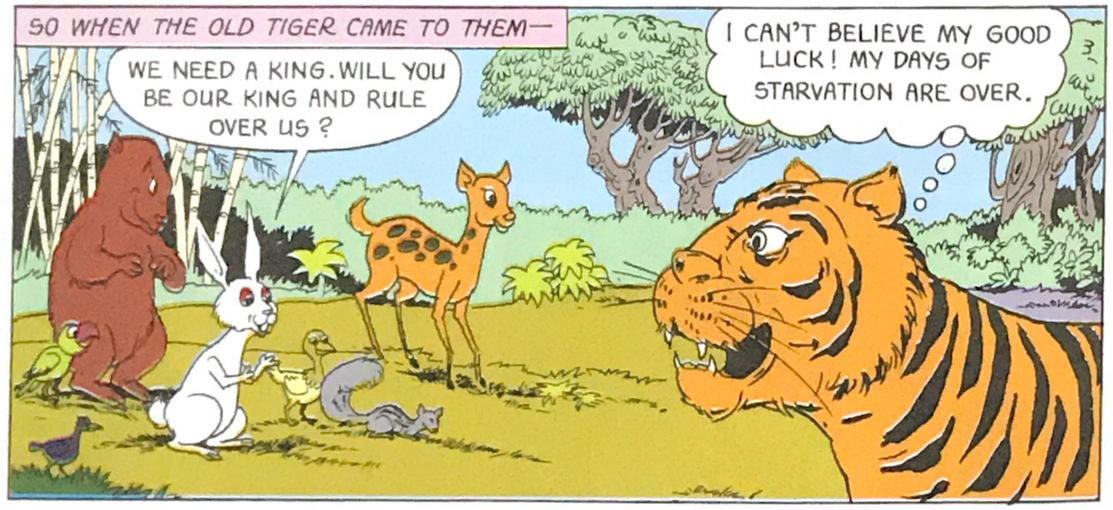

THE HARE, THE PARTRIDGE AND THE TIGER
ON THE BANKS OF THE NARMADA WAS A FOREST. THE ANIMALS WHO LIVED THERE WERE ALWAYS QUARRELLING.

WE QUARREL BECAUSE WE HAVE NO KING TO SETTLE OUR DISPUTES.
YES. WE SHOULD HAVE A KING.
BUT WHO WILL BE THE KING?

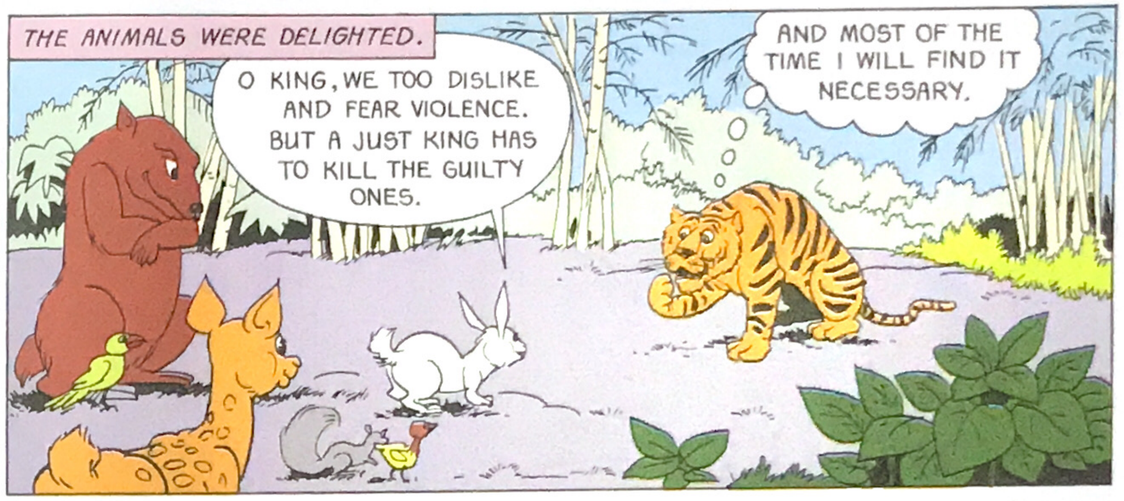
PANDEMONIUM BROKE OUT.
I WILL BE THE KING.
NOT YOU. I WILL BE THE KING.
IT SHOULD BE ME.

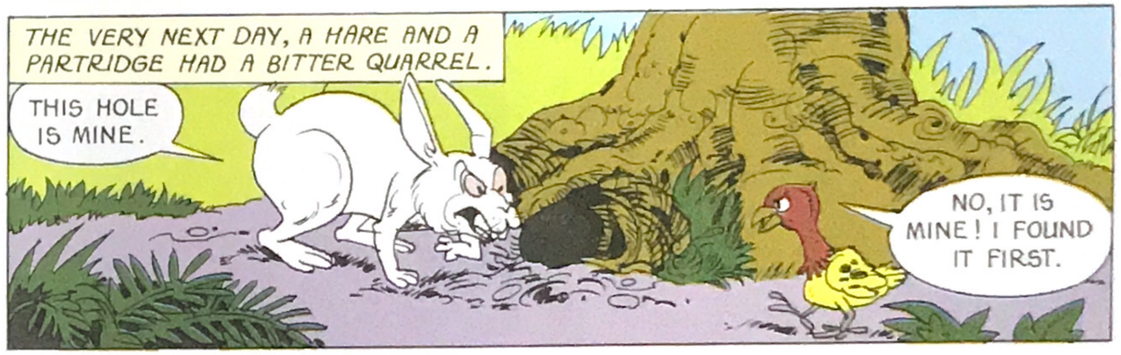

AN OLD AND INFIRM TIGER, WHO HAD RECENTLY MIGRATED TO THAT FOREST WAS ROUSED FROM HIS SLUMBER.
WHERE IS THIS NOISE FROM? LET ME SEE.


WHEN THE ANIMALS SAW THE OLD TIGER APPROACHING—
WHY DON'T WE MAKE HIM OUR KING?
A GOOD IDEA.

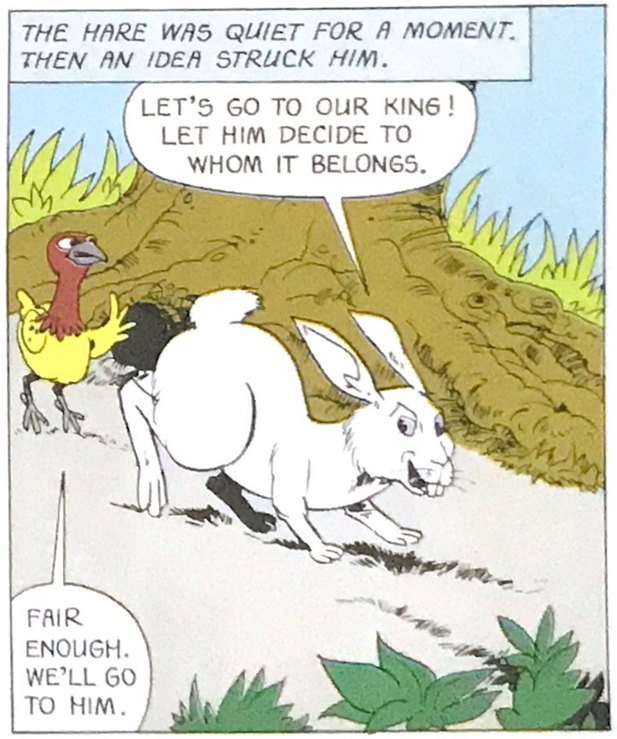

SO WHEN THE OLD TIGER CAME TO THEM—
WE NEED A KING. WILL YOU BE OUR KING AND RULE OVER US?
I CAN'T BELIEVE MY GOOD LUCK! MY DAYS OF STARVATION ARE OVER.

I DO NOT MIND BEING KING. BUT I DISLIKE VIOLENCE. SO I WILL KILL ONLY IF IT IS ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY, AFTER MAKING A CAREFUL STUDY OF EACH CASE.

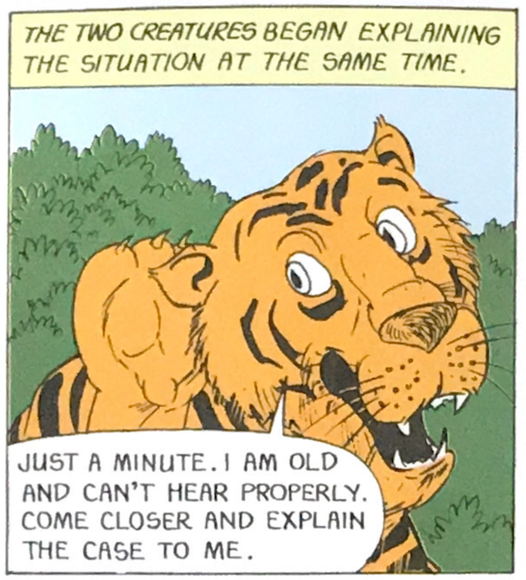

THE ANIMALS WERE DELIGHTED.
O KING, WE TOO DISLIKE AND FEAR VIOLENCE. BUT A JUST KING HAS TO KILL THE GUILTY ONES.
AND MOST OF THE TIME I WILL FIND IT NECESSARY.

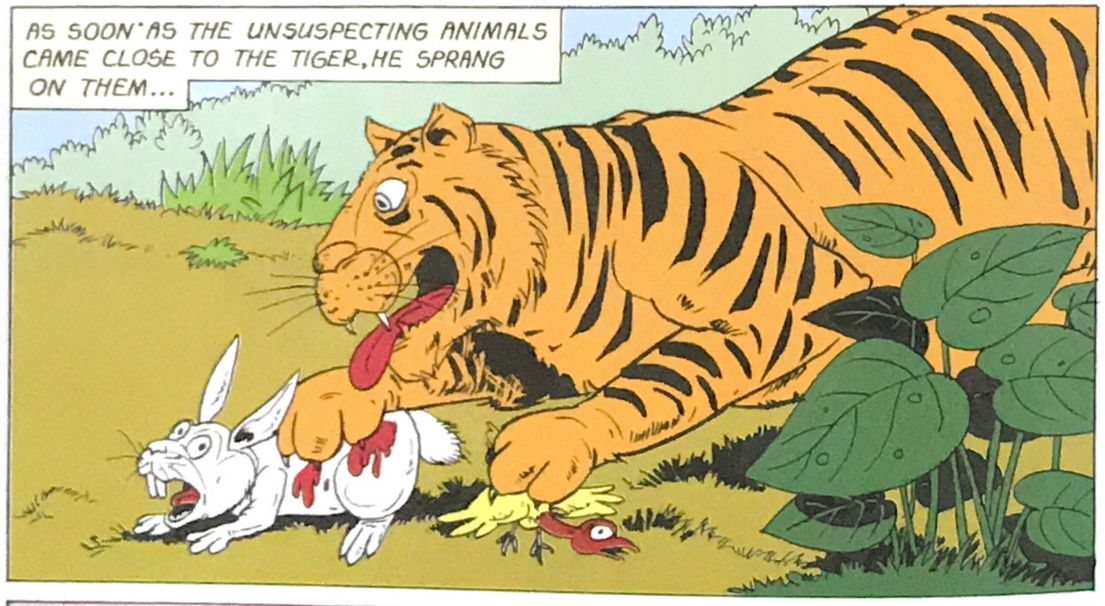

THE VERY NEXT DAY, A HARE AND A PARTRIDGE HAD A BITTER QUARREL.
THIS HOLE IS MINE.
NO, IT IS MINE! I FOUND IT FIRST.

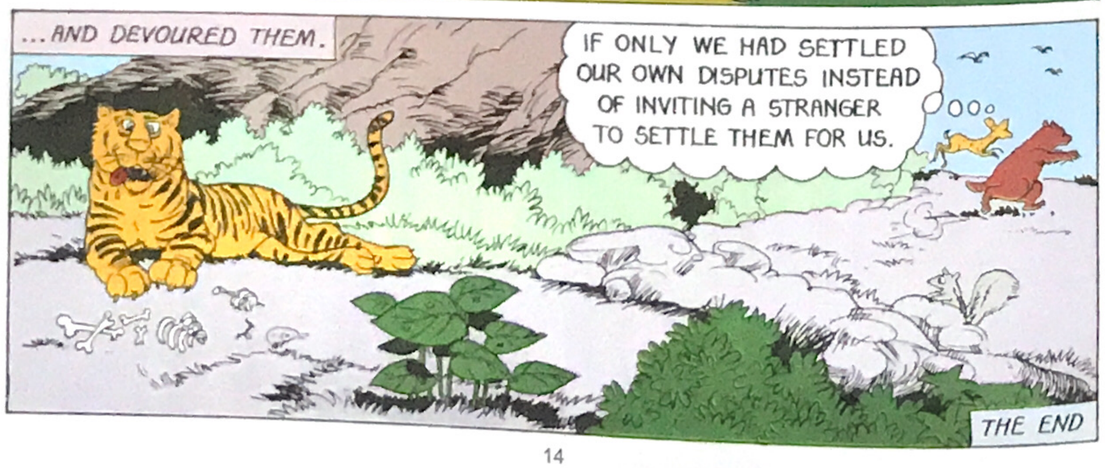
YOU FOUND IT ALL RIGHT. BUT IT WAS MY FATHER WHO MADE IT.
BUT YOUR FATHER ABANDONED IT. I MOVED IN. SO IT'S MINE.

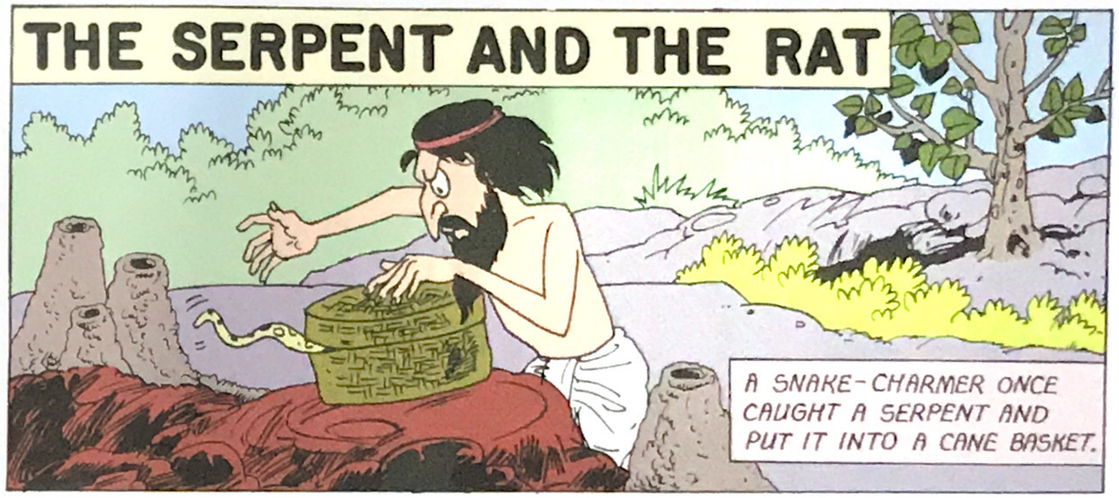

THE HARE WAS QUIET FOR A MOMENT. THEN AN IDEA STRUCK HIM.
LET'S GO TO OUR KING! LET HIM DECIDE TO WHOM IT BELONGS.
FAIR ENOUGH. WE'LL GO TO HIM.

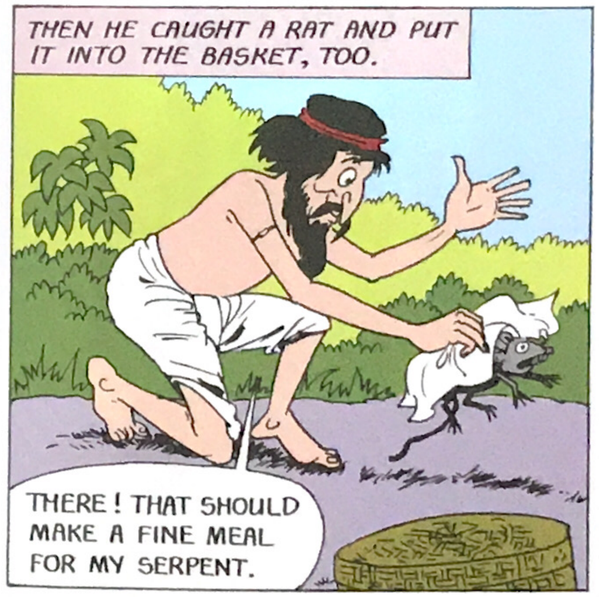
SO THEY WENT TO THE OLD TIGER.
O KING, WE SEEK JUSTICE.
WHY? WHAT'S THE MATTER?


THE TWO CREATURES BEGAN EXPLAINING THE SITUATION AT THE SAME TIME.
JUST A MINUTE. I AM OLD AND CAN'T HEAR PROPERLY. COME CLOSER AND EXPLAIN THE CASE TO ME.


AS SOON AS THE UNSUSPECTING ANIMALS CAME CLOSE TO THE TIGER, HE SPRANG ON THEM...


...AND DEVOURED THEM.
IF ONLY WE HAD SETTLED OUR OWN DISPUTES INSTEAD OF INVITING A STRANGER TO SETTLE THEM FOR US.
THE END

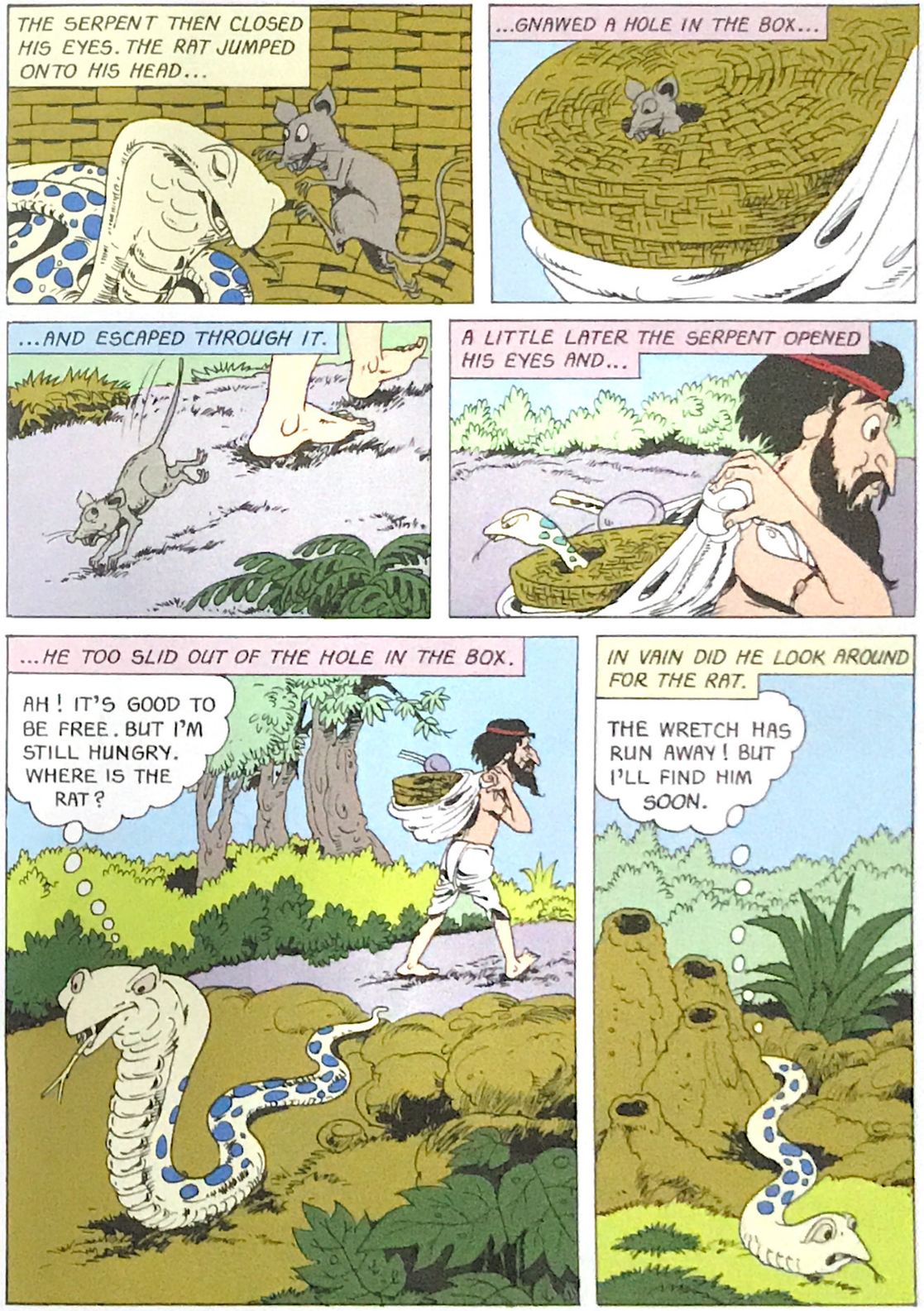

THE SERPENT AND THE RAT
A SNAKE-CHARMER ONCE CAUGHT A SERPENT AND PUT IT INTO A CANE BASKET.

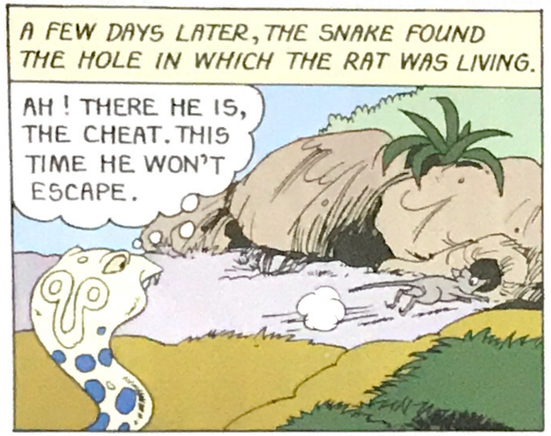

THEN HE CAUGHT A RAT AND PUT IT INTO THE BASKET, TOO.
THERE! THAT SHOULD MAKE A FINE MEAL FOR MY SERPENT.

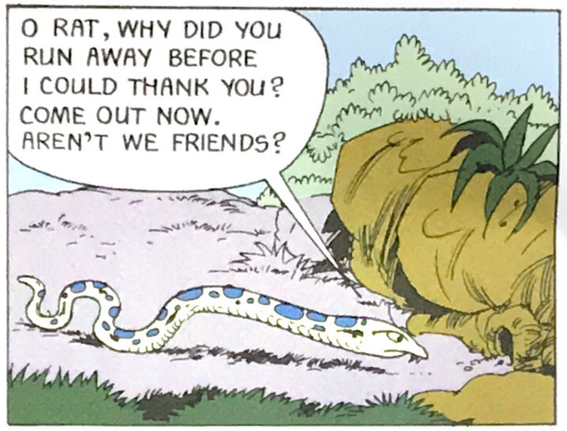
BUT WHEN THE SERPENT CAME NEAR THE RAT TO EAT IT—
PLEASE SPARE MY LIFE! I CAN FREE YOU.

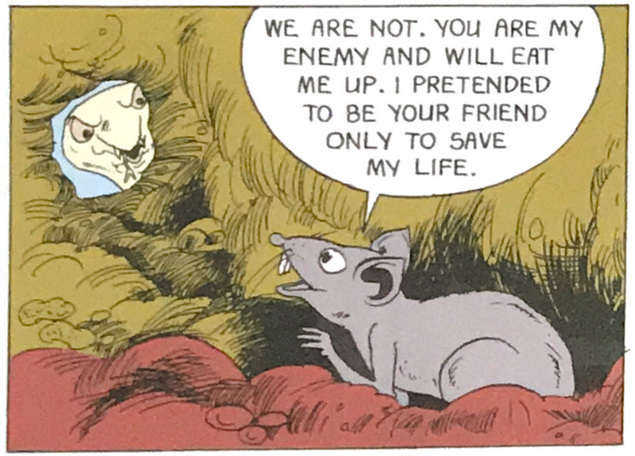
THE SERPENT WAS AMUSED.
HOW CAN YOU SUCCEED WHERE I HAVE FAILED. BESIDES, I'M TERRIBLY HUNGRY.

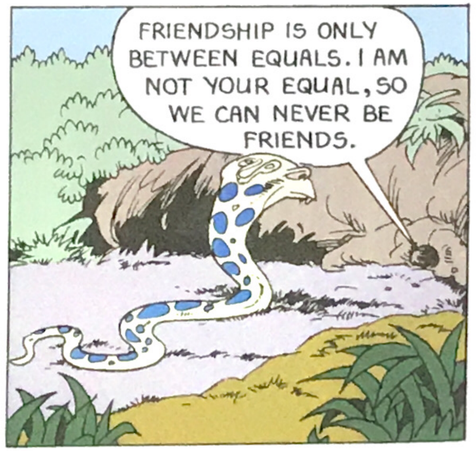
THEN WHAT'S THE USE OF EATING ME? I CAN HARDLY SATISFY YOUR HUNGER. IF YOU SPARE MY LIFE, I CAN LEAD YOU OUT TO GET ALL THE FOOD YOU NEED.
BETTER FOOD PERHAPS, FROGS, LIZARDS, PLUMPER RATS THAN ME...
HE IS RIGHT. BESIDES, I CAN EAT HIM AS WELL, LATER.
ALL RIGHT. I WILL NOT EAT YOU. TELL ME HOW YOU CAN GET ME OUT.
I SHALL CHANT A MANTRA SITTING ON YOUR HEAD.
AS SOON AS IT IS OVER I SHALL CALL YOU. TILL THEN YOU SHOULD CLOSE YOUR EYES AND STAY STILL.
I'LL DO AS YOU SAY. BUT PLEASE WAIT FOR ME OUTSIDE.

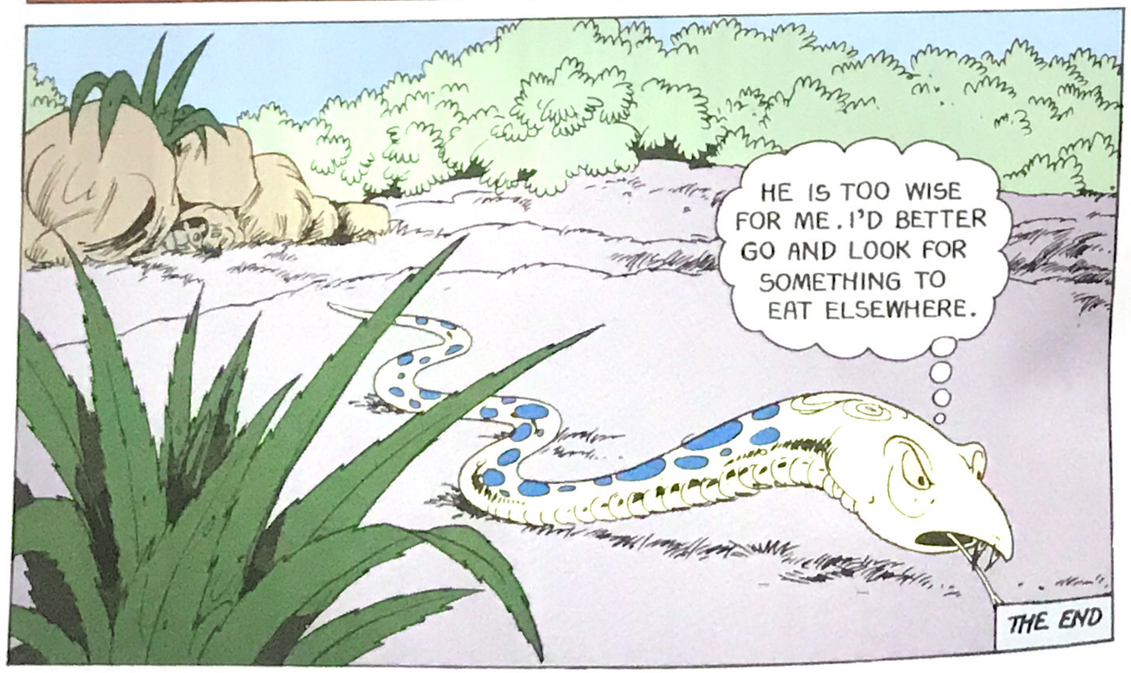

THE SERPENT THEN CLOSED HIS EYES. THE RAT JUMPED ONTO HIS HEAD...
...GNAWED A HOLE IN THE BOX...
...AND ESCAPED THROUGH IT.
A LITTLE LATER THE SERPENT OPENED HIS EYES AND...
...HE TOO SLID OUT OF THE HOLE IN THE BOX.
AH! IT'S GOOD TO BE FREE. BUT I'M STILL HUNGRY. WHERE IS THE RAT?
IN VAIN DID HE LOOK AROUND FOR THE RAT.
THE WRETCH HAS RUN AWAY! BUT I'LL FIND HIM SOON.

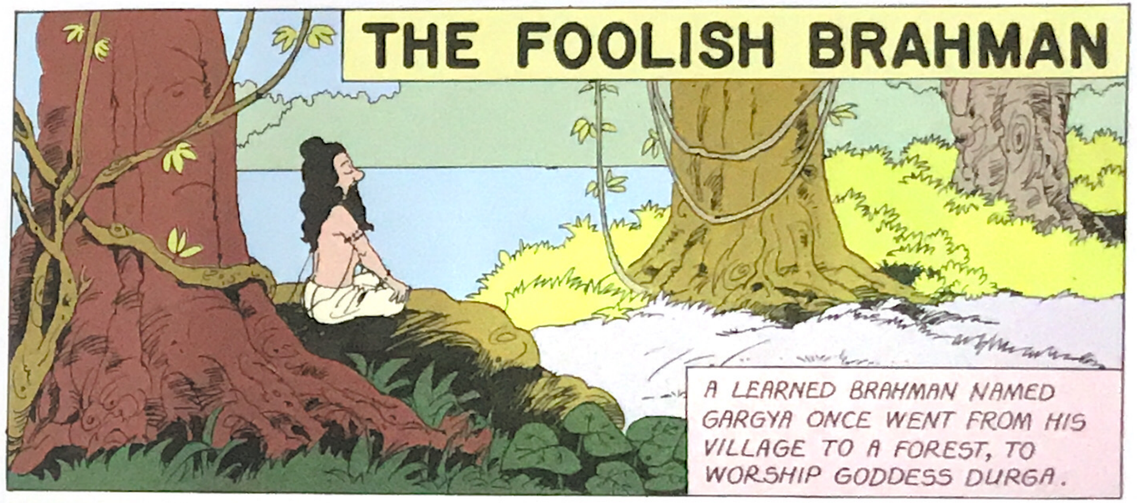


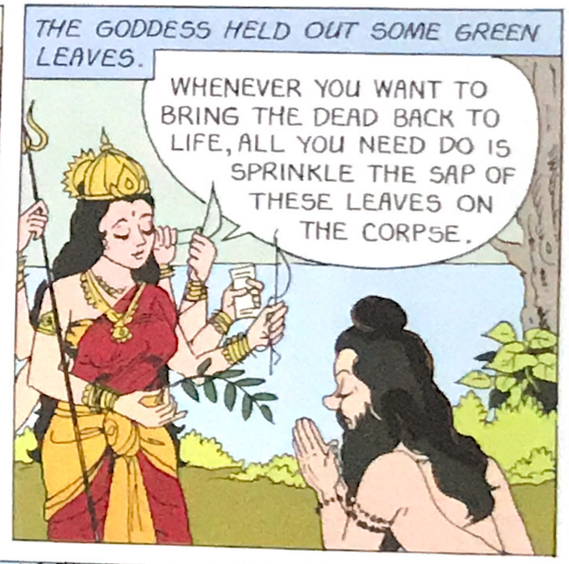






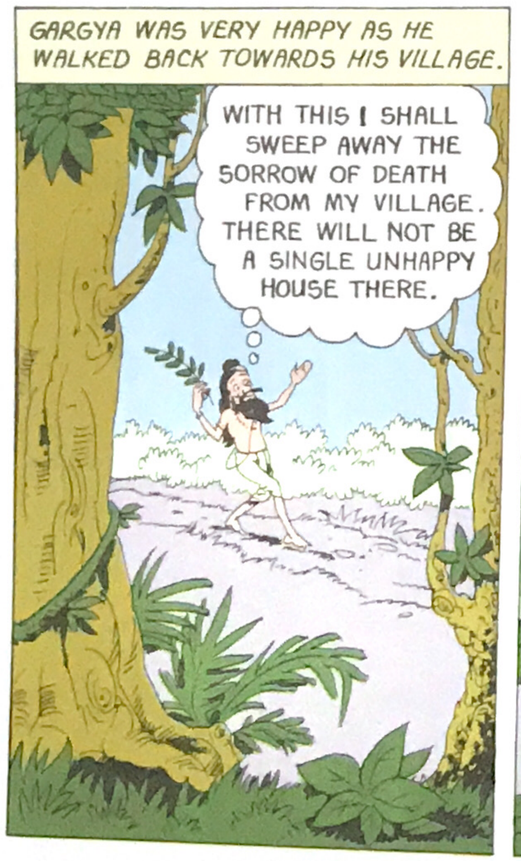


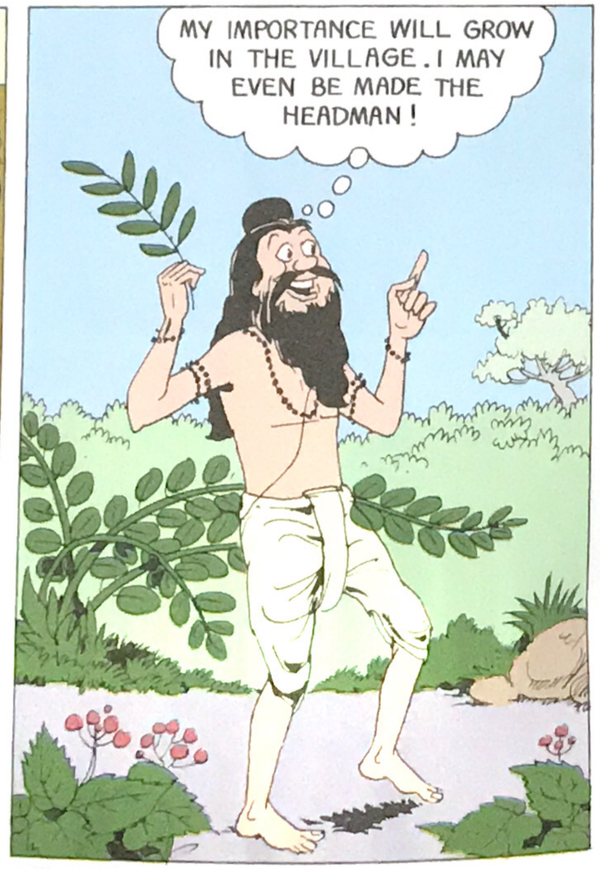


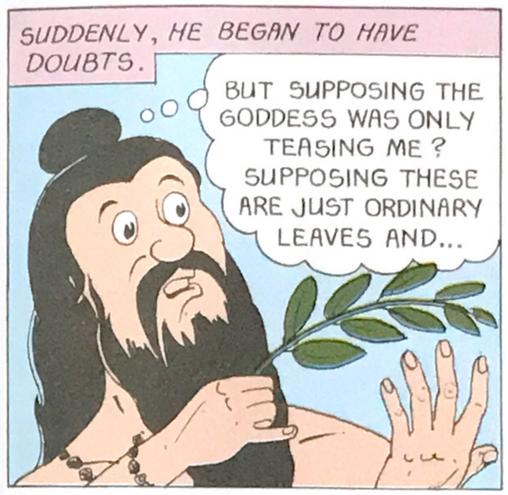


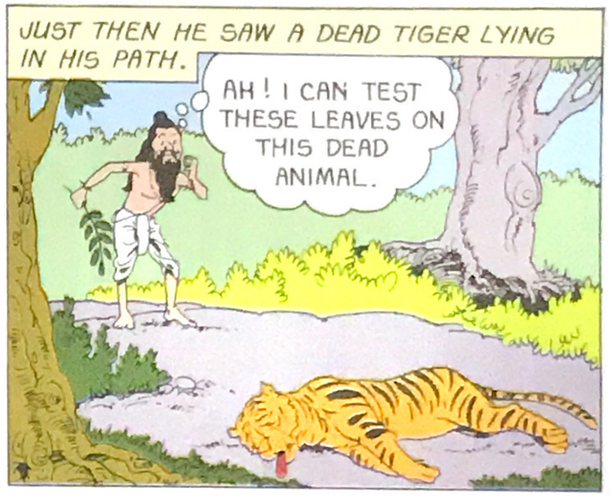
* A HERB WHICH IS CREDITED WITH THE POWER TO REVIVE THE DEAD.

BESIDES, THESE LEAVES WILL NEITHER WITHER NOR CHANGE.
AND THE GODDESS DISAPPEARED.


GARGYA WAS VERY HAPPY AS HE WALKED BACK TOWARDS HIS VILLAGE.
WITH THIS I SHALL SWEEP AWAY THE SORROW OF DEATH FROM MY VILLAGE. THERE WILL NOT BE A SINGLE UNHAPPY HOUSE THERE.


MY IMPORTANCE WILL GROW IN THE VILLAGE. I MAY EVEN BE MADE THE HEADMAN!


SUDDENLY, HE BEGAN TO HAVE DOUBTS.
BUT SUPPOSING THE GODDESS WAS ONLY TEASING ME? SUPPOSING THESE ARE JUST ORDINARY LEAVES AND...

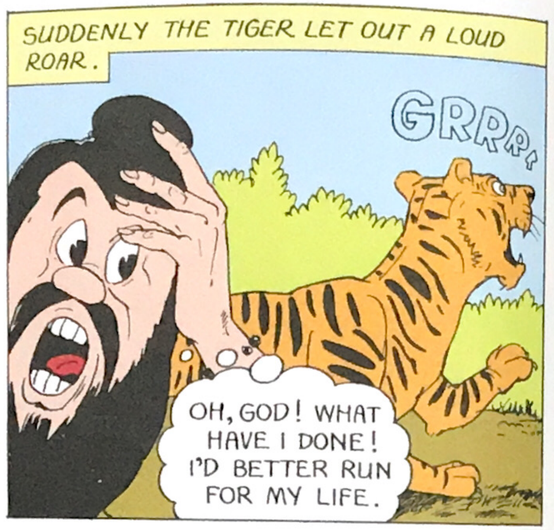

JUST THEN HE SAW A DEAD TIGER LYING IN HIS PATH.
AH! I CAN TEST THESE LEAVES ON THIS DEAD ANIMAL.

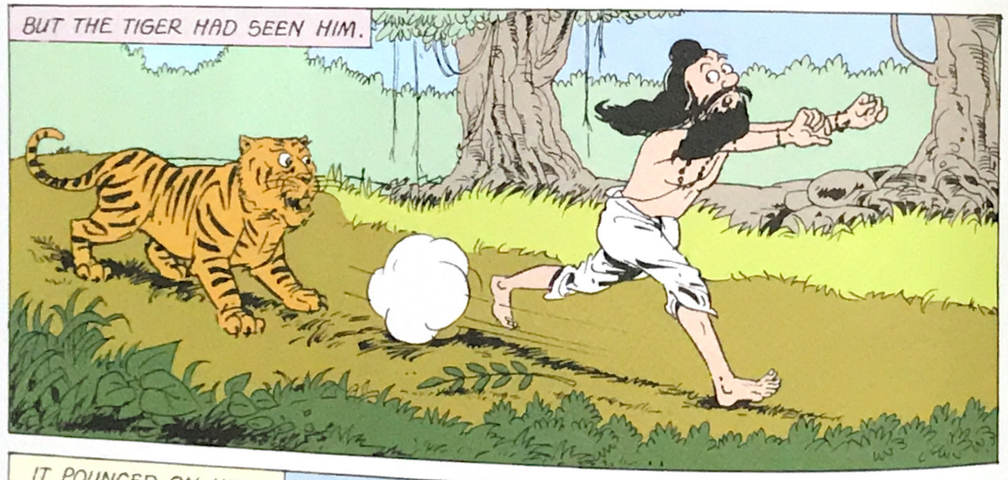
WITHOUT STOPPING TO THINK, THE FOOLISH, THOUGH LEARNED, BRAHMAN CRUSHED THE LEAVES IN HIS PALMS...

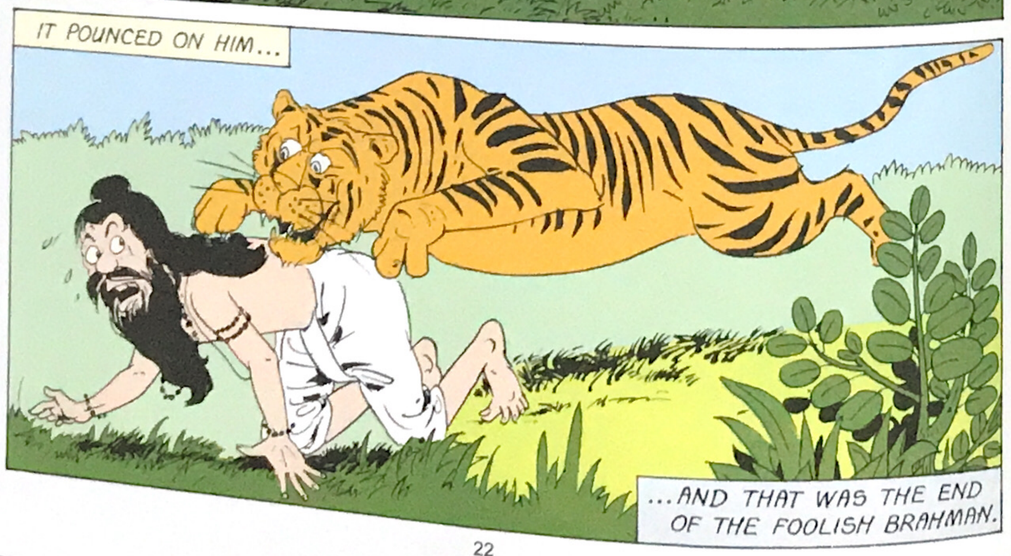
...AND SPRINKLED THE JUICE OVER THE TIGER.

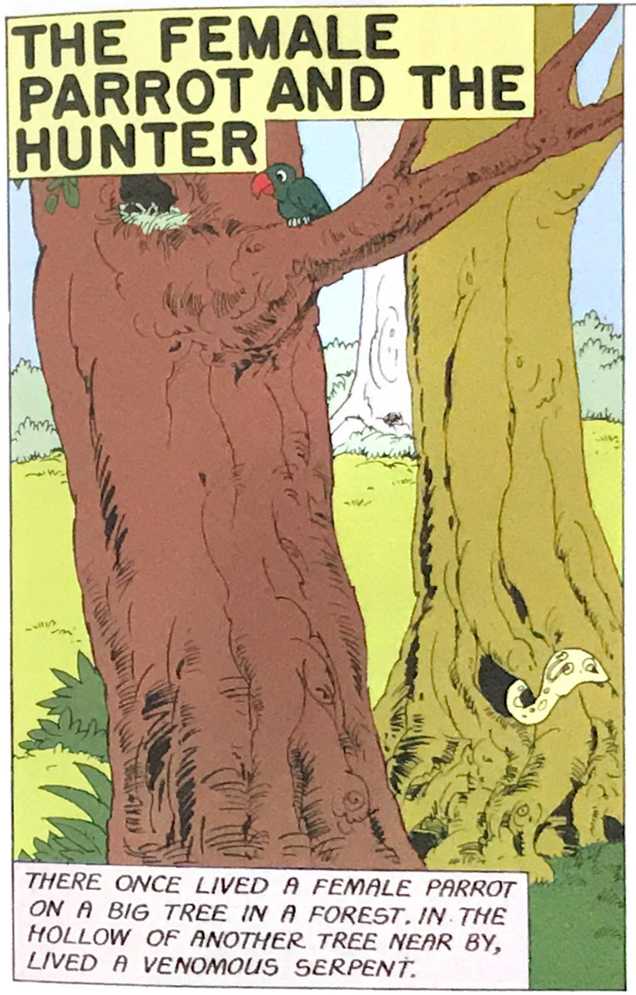
THE TIGER STIRRED TO LIFE...
HM...M...M! I'M HUNGRY.

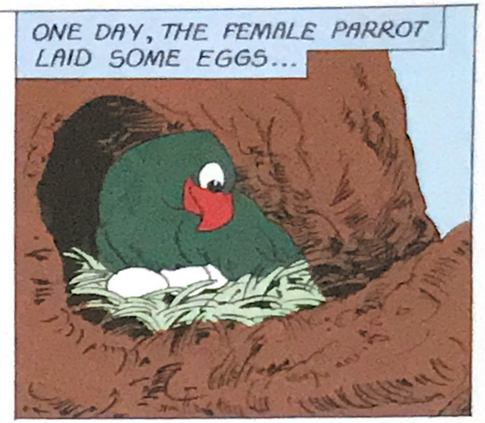
IT WORKS! THE LEAVES WORK!

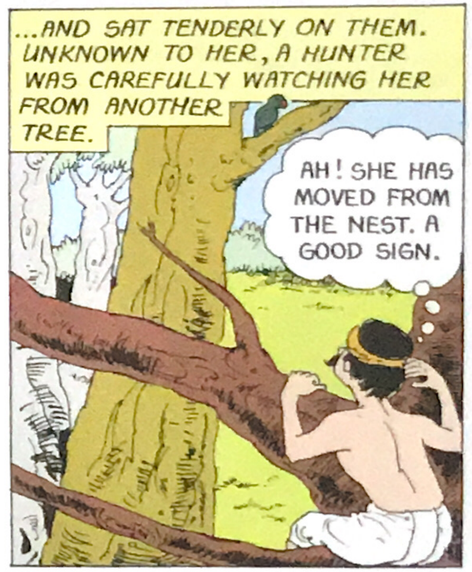

SUDDENLY THE TIGER LET OUT A LOUD ROAR.
GRRRR!
OH, GOD! WHAT HAVE I DONE! I'D BETTER RUN FOR MY LIFE.

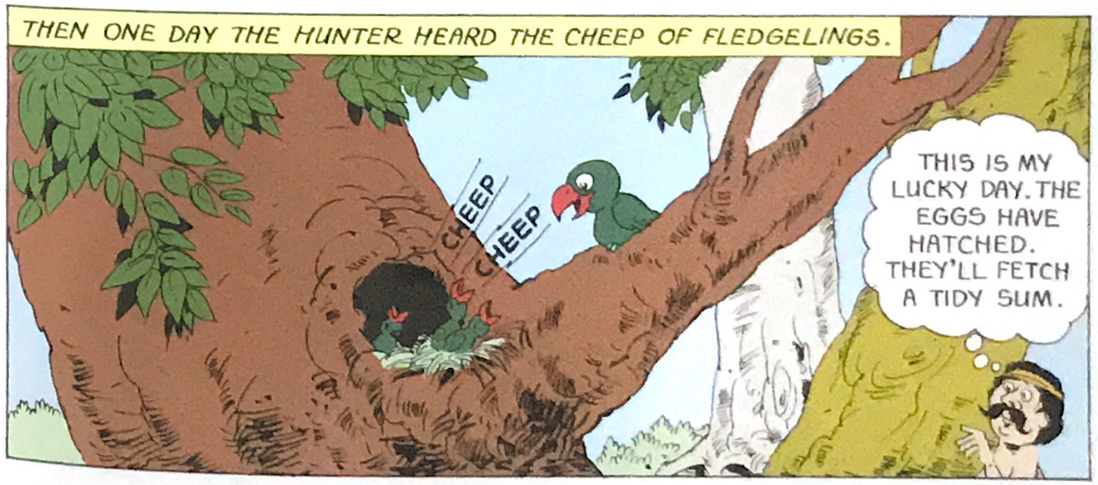

BUT THE TIGER HAD SEEN HIM.

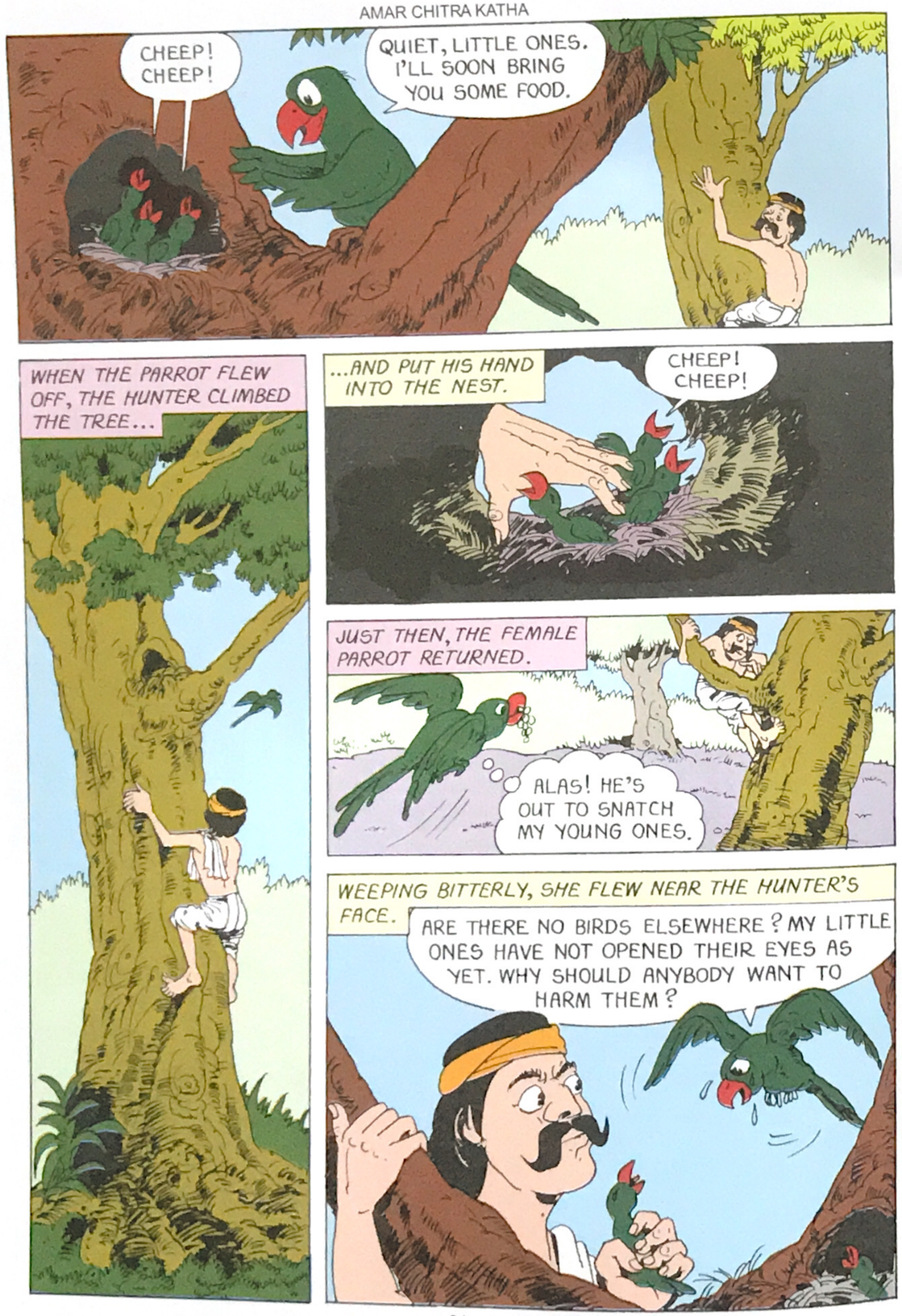

IT POUNCED ON HIM...
...AND THAT WAS THE END OF THE FOOLISH BRAHMAN.

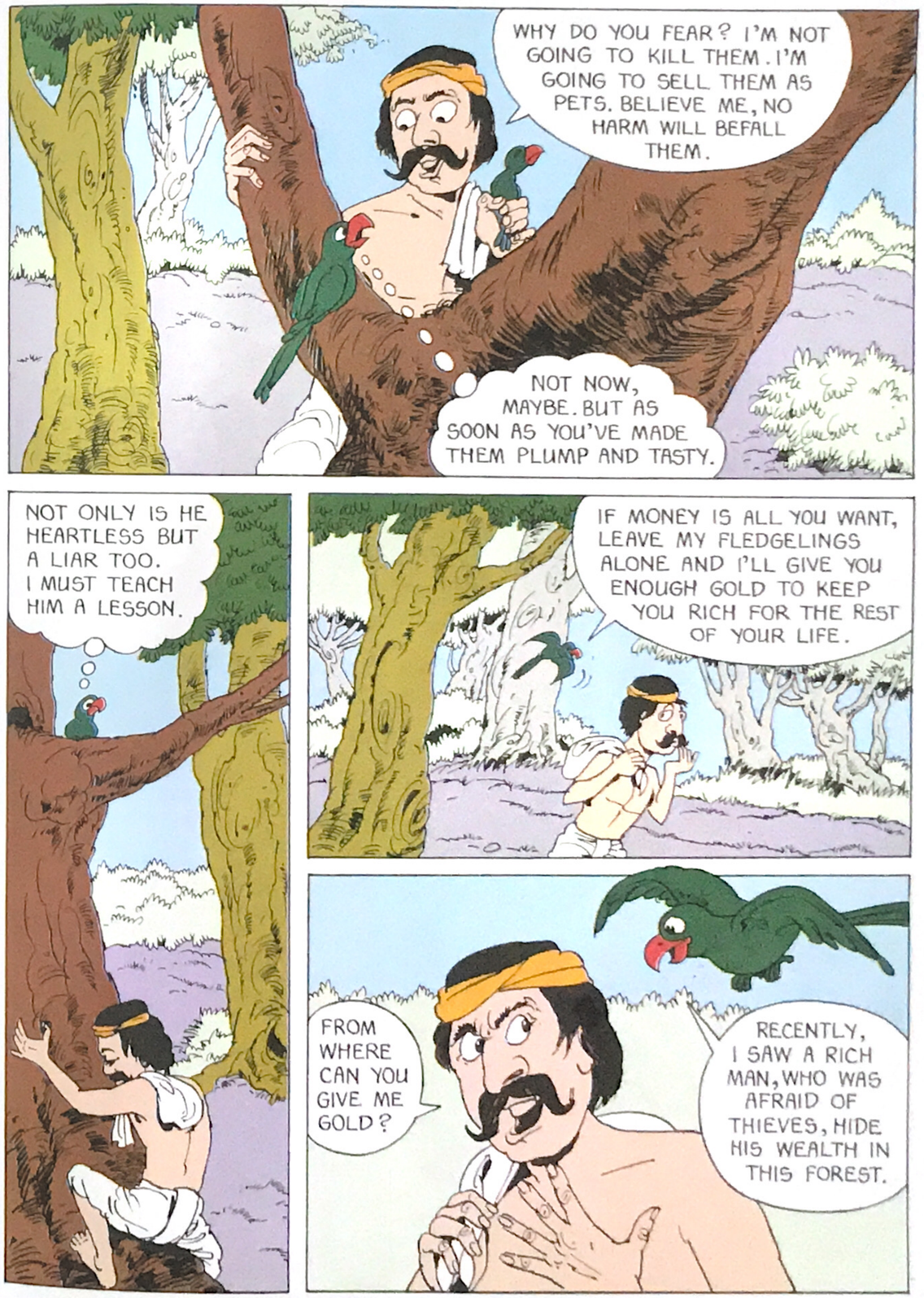

THE FEMALE PARROT AND THE HUNTER
THERE ONCE LIVED A FEMALE PARROT ON A BIG TREE IN A FOREST. IN THE HOLLOW OF ANOTHER TREE NEAR BY, LIVED A VENOMOUS SERPENT.

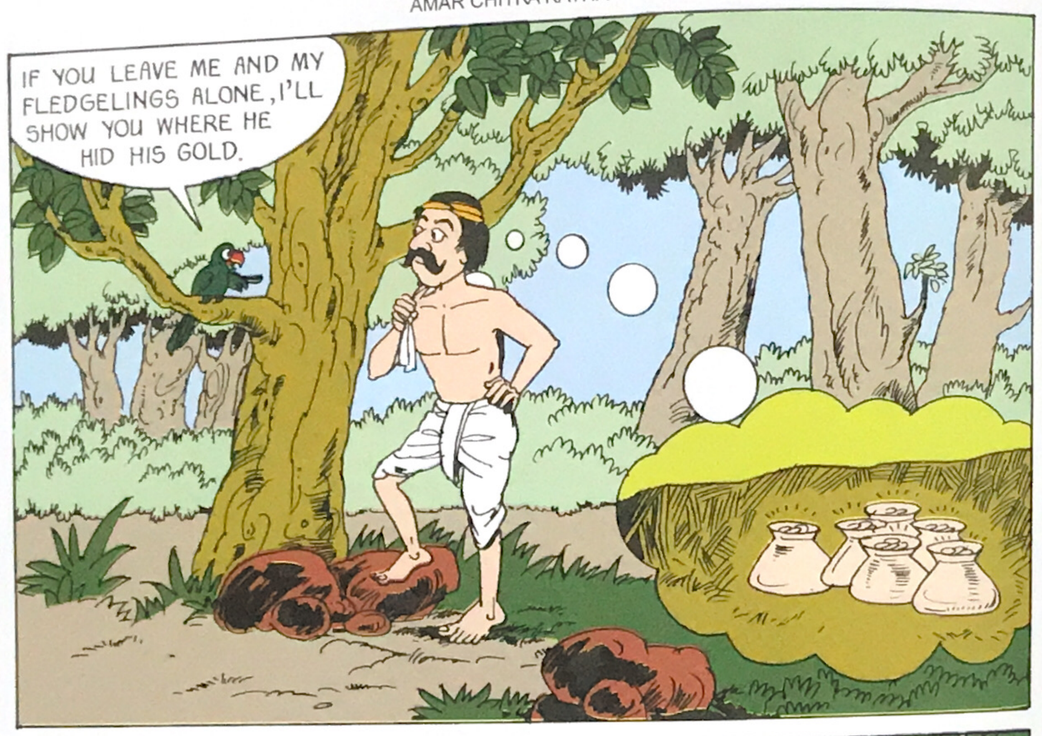

ONE DAY, THE FEMALE PARROT LAID SOME EGGS...


...AND SAT TENDERLY ON THEM. UNKNOWN TO HER, A HUNTER WAS CAREFULLY WATCHING HER FROM ANOTHER TREE.
AH! SHE HAS MOVED FROM THE NEST. A GOOD SIGN.


THEN ONE DAY THE HUNTER HEARD THE CHEEP OF FLEDGELINGS.
CHEEP
CHEEP
THIS IS MY LUCKY DAY. THE EGGS HAVE HATCHED. THEY'LL FETCH A TIDY SUM.


CHEEP! CHEEP!
QUIET, LITTLE ONES. I'LL SOON BRING YOU SOME FOOD.
WHEN THE PARROT FLEW OFF, THE HUNTER CLIMBED THE TREE...
...AND PUT HIS HAND INTO THE NEST.
CHEEP! CHEEP!
JUST THEN, THE FEMALE PARROT RETURNED.
ALAS! HE'S OUT TO SNATCH MY YOUNG ONES.
WEEPING BITTERLY, SHE FLEW NEAR THE HUNTER'S FACE.
ARE THERE NO BIRDS ELSEWHERE? MY LITTLE ONES HAVE NOT OPENED THEIR EYES AS YET. WHY SHOULD ANYBODY WANT TO HARM THEM?

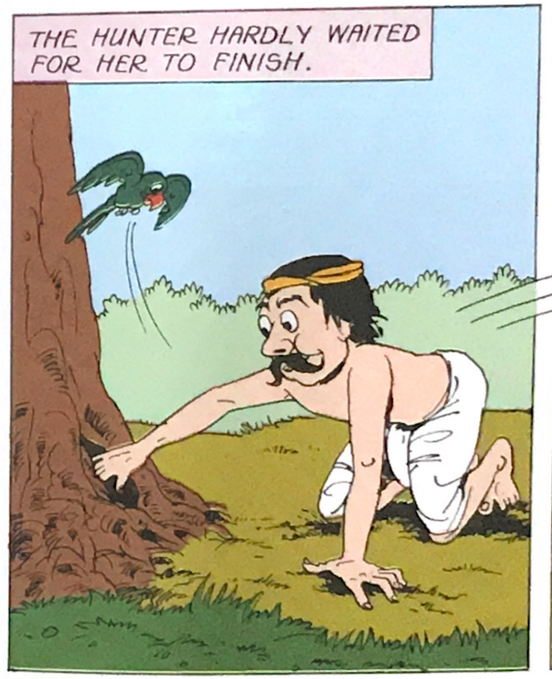

WHY DO YOU FEAR? I'M NOT GOING TO KILL THEM. I'M GOING TO SELL THEM AS PETS. BELIEVE ME, NO HARM WILL BEFALL THEM.
NOT NOW, MAYBE. BUT AS SOON AS YOU'VE MADE THEM PLUMP AND TASTY.
NOT ONLY IS HE HEARTLESS BUT A LIAR TOO. I MUST TEACH HIM A LESSON.
IF MONEY IS ALL YOU WANT, LEAVE MY FLEDGELINGS ALONE AND I'LL GIVE YOU ENOUGH GOLD TO KEEP YOU RICH FOR THE REST OF YOUR LIFE.
FROM WHERE CAN YOU GIVE ME GOLD?
RECENTLY, I SAW A RICH MAN, WHO WAS AFRAID OF THIEVES, HIDE HIS WEALTH IN THIS FOREST.

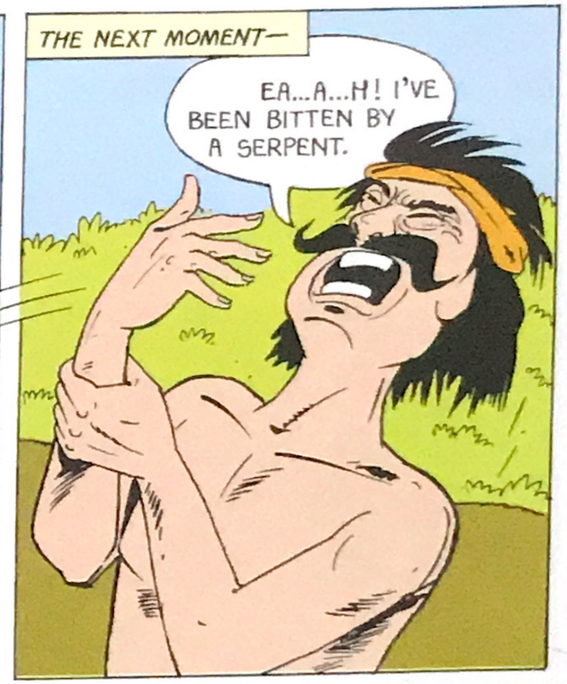

IF YOU LEAVE ME AND MY FLEDGELINGS ALONE, I'LL SHOW YOU WHERE HE HID HIS GOLD.

THE GREEDY HUNTER WAS VERY HAPPY.
ALL MINE! I'LL TAKE THE GOLD, THE FLEDGELINGS AND THE PARROT AS WELL. BUT FIRST I MUST WIN HER CONFIDENCE.
CHEEP CHEEP

THERE! I'VE PLACED YOUR LITTLE ONES BACK. NOW SHOW ME WHERE THE GOLD IS.
FOLLOW ME.

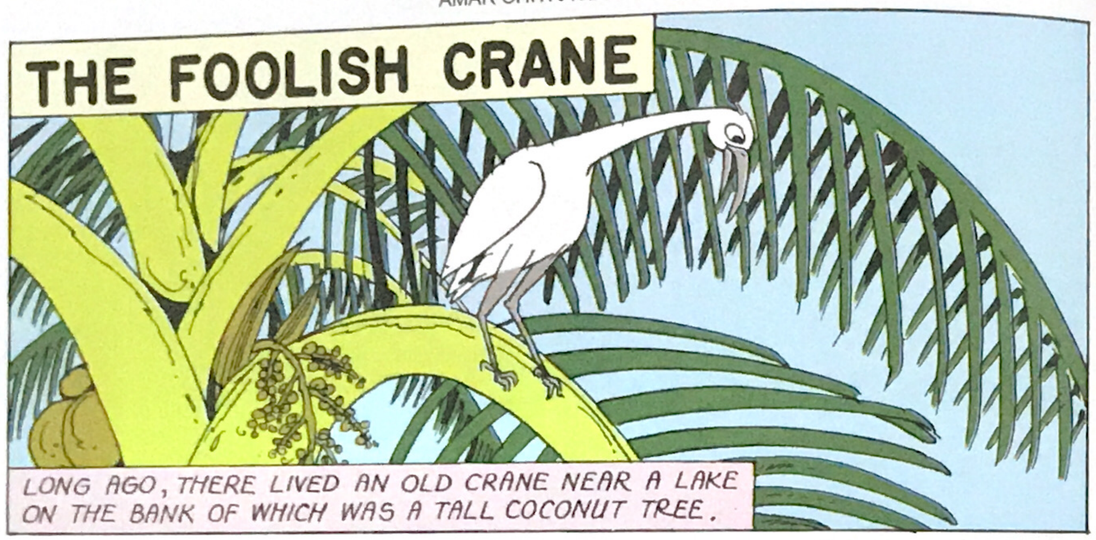
SHE LED HIM TO THE TREE WHERE THE SERPENT LIVED AND POINTED TO THE HOLLOW.
PUT YOUR HAND INTO THAT HOLLOW AND TAKE ALL THE GOLD YOU WANT.

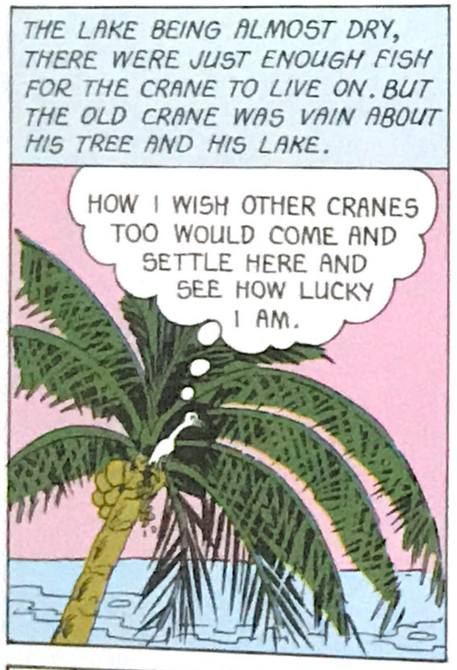

THE HUNTER HARDLY WAITED FOR HER TO FINISH.

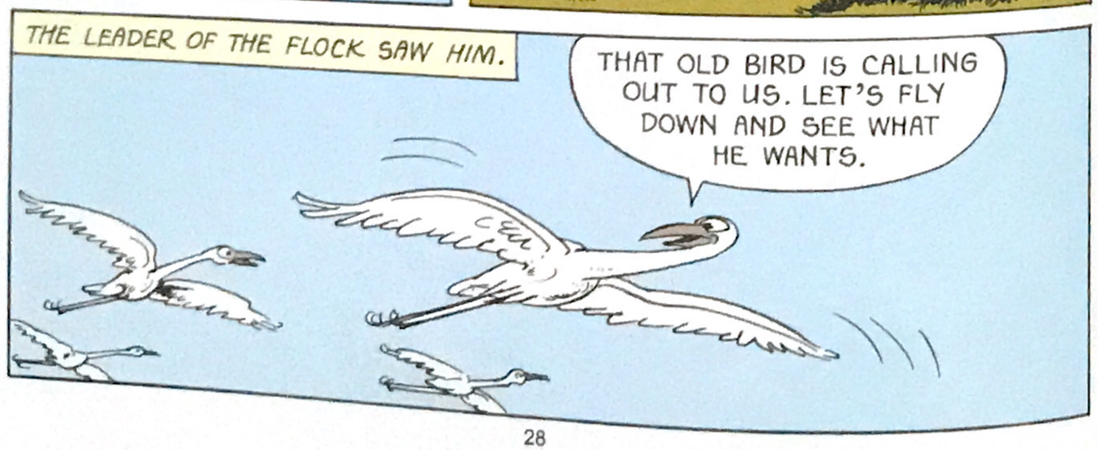

THE NEXT MOMENT—
EA...A...H! I'VE BEEN BITTEN BY A SERPENT.

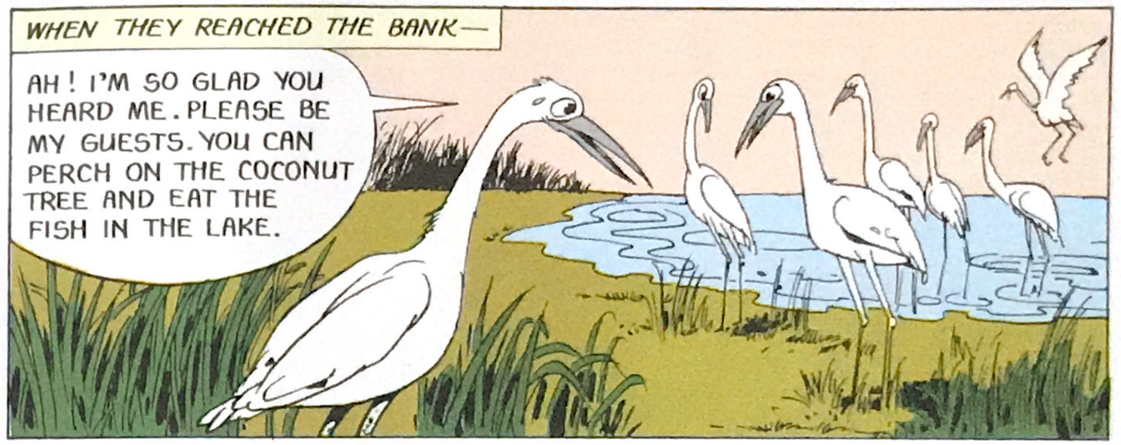
WITHIN MINUTES THE POISON SPREAD ALL OVER HIS BODY AND HE FELL DEAD.
IT'S A PITY HE HAD TO DIE. BUT THAT WAS THE ONLY WAY I COULD SAVE MY YOUNG ONES.
THE END

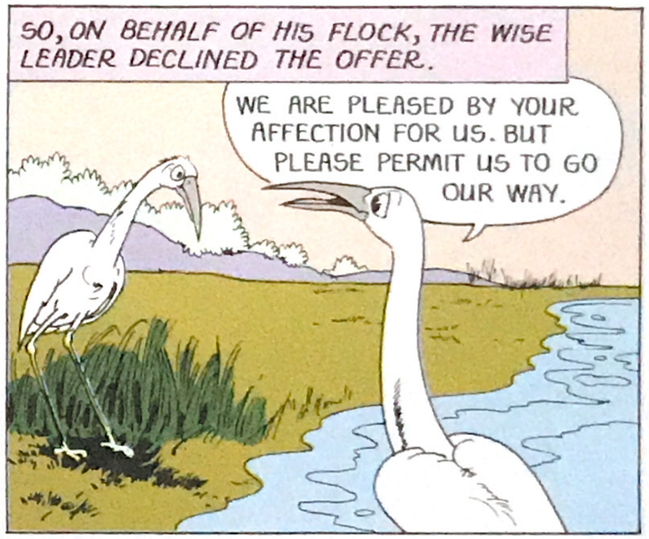
THE FOOLISH CRANE

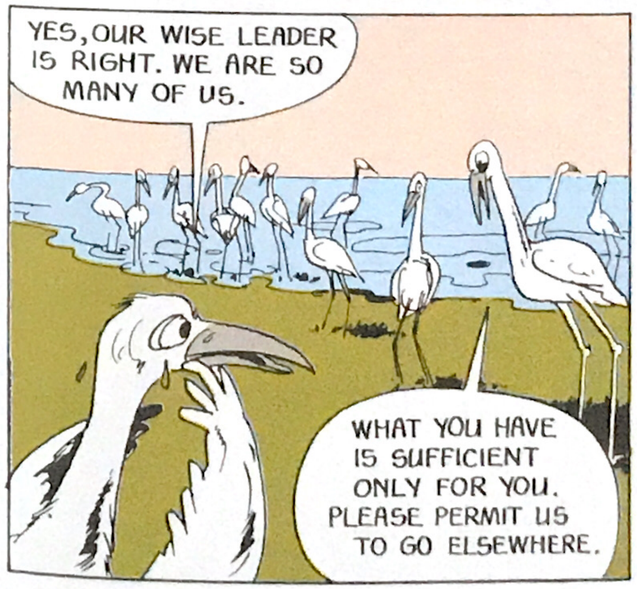










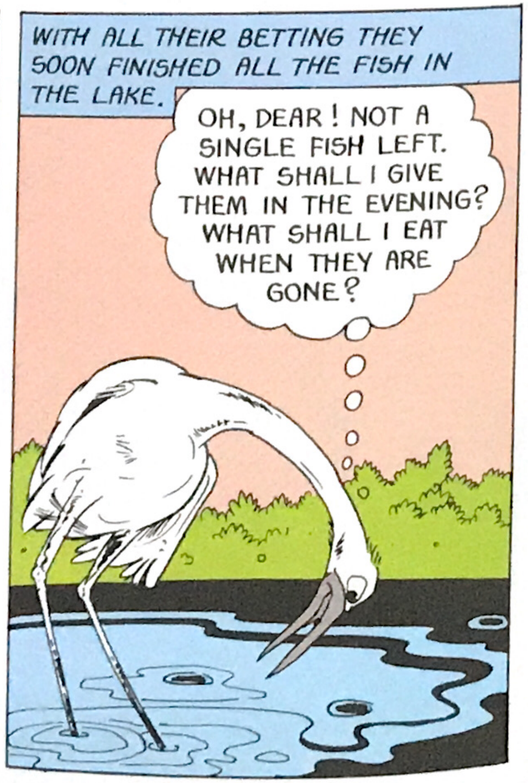


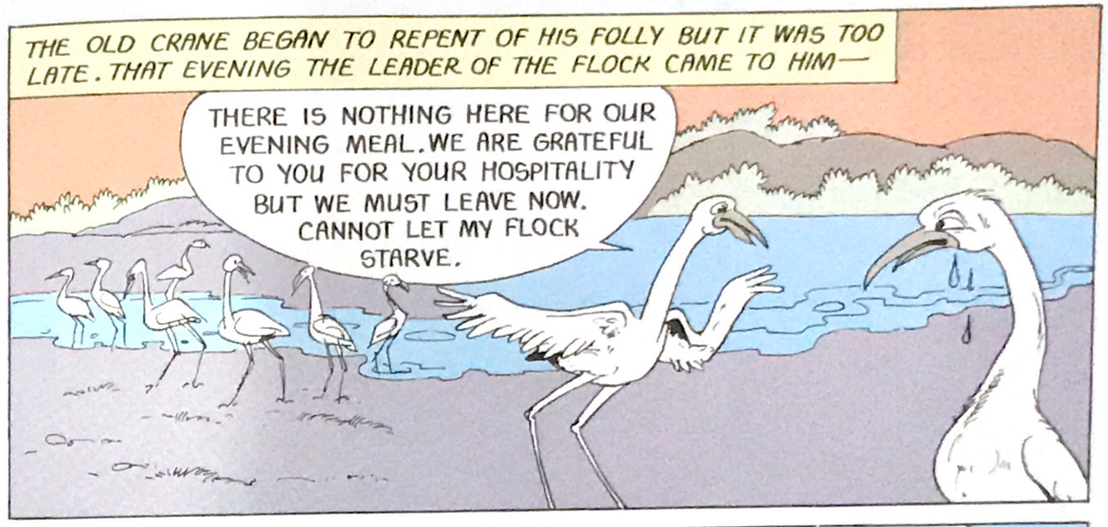
THE WISE LEADER HAD NO CHOICE BUT TO ACCEPT.
ALL RIGHT. WE SHALL BE YOUR GUESTS.
COME, THEN. LET US GO TO MY TREE.

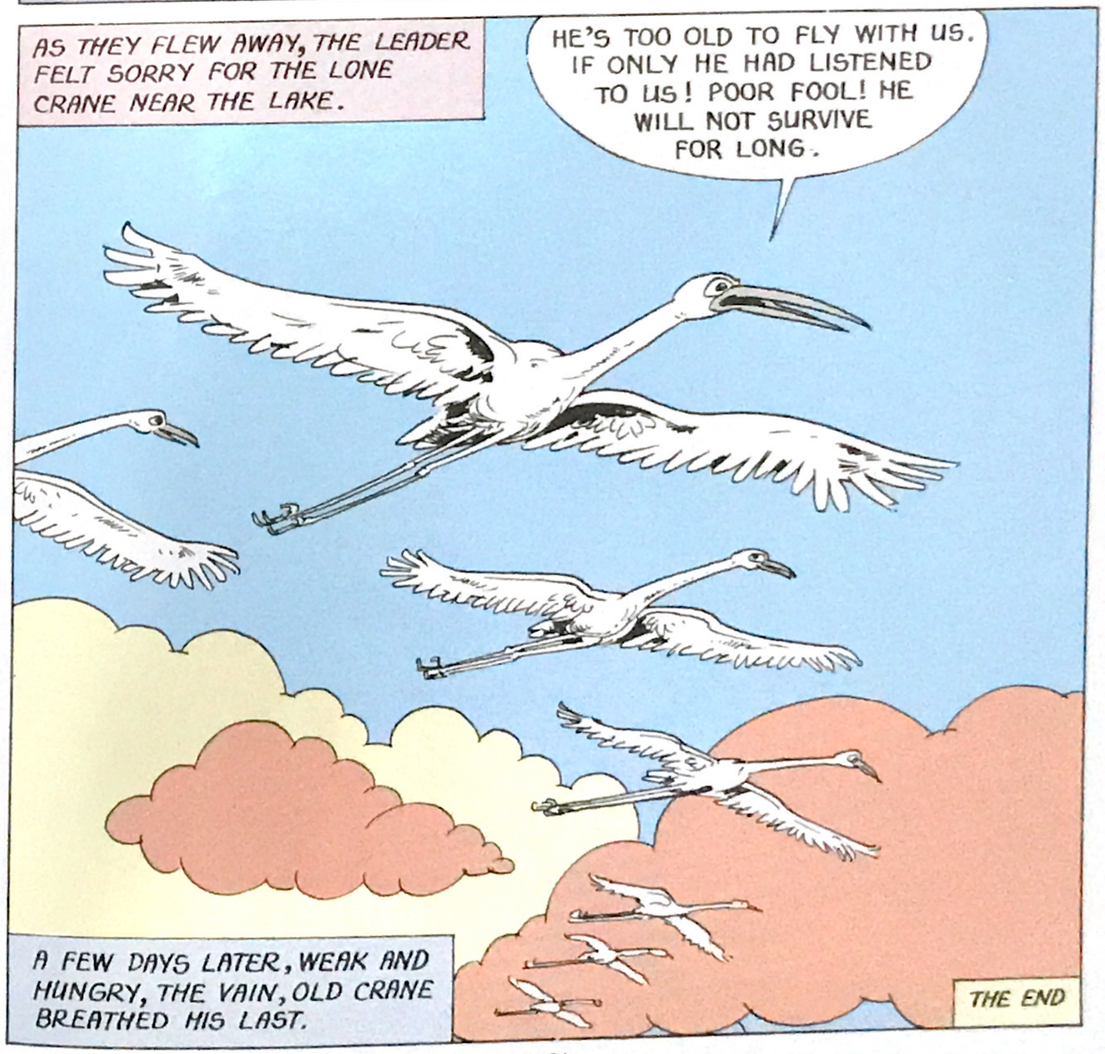
SO THE CRANES ALL WENT TO THE COCONUT TREE.

THE OLD CRANE FELT QUITE PROUD AND STRUTTED ABOUT IN HIS VANITY.
MAKE YOURSELVES COMFORTABLE AND WHEN YOU ARE HUNGRY PLEASE HELP YOURSELVES TO THE FISH IN MY LAKE. THERE IS ENOUGH FOR ALL OF YOU.

THE FLOCK OF CRANES TOOK HIM AT HIS WORD AND BEGAN FEASTING ON THE FISH.
I BET I CAN EAT MORE THAN YOU.
I BET YOU CAN'T.
I'VE EATEN SIX FISH ALREADY. CAN EITHER OF YOU BETTER THAT?


WITH ALL THEIR BETTING THEY SOON FINISHED ALL THE FISH IN THE LAKE.
OH, DEAR! NOT A SINGLE FISH LEFT. WHAT SHALL I GIVE THEM IN THE EVENING? WHAT SHALL I EAT WHEN THEY ARE GONE?


THE OLD CRANE BEGAN TO REPENT OF HIS FOLLY BUT IT WAS TOO LATE. THAT EVENING THE LEADER OF THE FLOCK CAME TO HIM—
THERE IS NOTHING HERE FOR OUR EVENING MEAL. WE ARE GRATEFUL TO YOU FOR YOUR HOSPITALITY BUT WE MUST LEAVE NOW. CANNOT LET MY FLOCK STARVE.


AS THEY FLEW AWAY, THE LEADER FELT SORRY FOR THE LONE CRANE NEAR THE LAKE.
HE'S TOO OLD TO FLY WITH US. IF ONLY HE HAD LISTENED TO US! POOR FOOL! HE WILL NOT SURVIVE FOR LONG.
A FEW DAYS LATER, WEAK AND HUNGRY, THE VAIN, OLD CRANE BREATHED HIS LAST.
THE END